DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 827 EA 031 766

TITLE	Motion To Reconsider: Education Governance at a Crossroads. The Report of the NASBE Study Group on Education Governance.
INSTITUTION	National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA.
PUB DATE	1996-10-00
NOTE	59p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Association of State Boards of Education, 277 South Washington Street, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314 ($12; members $9.60). Tel: 703-684-4000; Fax: 703-836-2313; Web site: http://www.nasbe.org.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Characteristics; Administrators; *Board of Education Role; *Boards of Education; *Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; *Governance

ABSTRACT

The demographics and educational needs of individual states are far too varied to identify any single preferred structure of educational governance. What matters is quality of leadership. Ideally state board of education members should possess integrity combined with decision-making and teamwork skills. The board should engage important stakeholders and the general public, granting as much autonomy as possible to the lowest possible level, as long as essential governance responsibilities are maintained through reliable methods of accountability. Neither the status quo nor narrow political factions should be in charge. All points of view should be honestly brought forward to be investigated, evaluated, and calmly debated. Relevant research findings and innovative ideas should be considered. The merits and potential consequences of proposed policies should be carefully considered. Decisions should be reached through a fair process that balances competing interests while offering solutions that are more than quick fixes or shortsighted tinkering. Board members should look at the whole picture and work to establish steady nonpartisan leadership. The contextual, educational, interpersonal, analytical, political, and strategic dimensions form the six competencies of effective boards. Education governance in all states is summarized in chart format. The current four models of state governance are described. (RKJ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

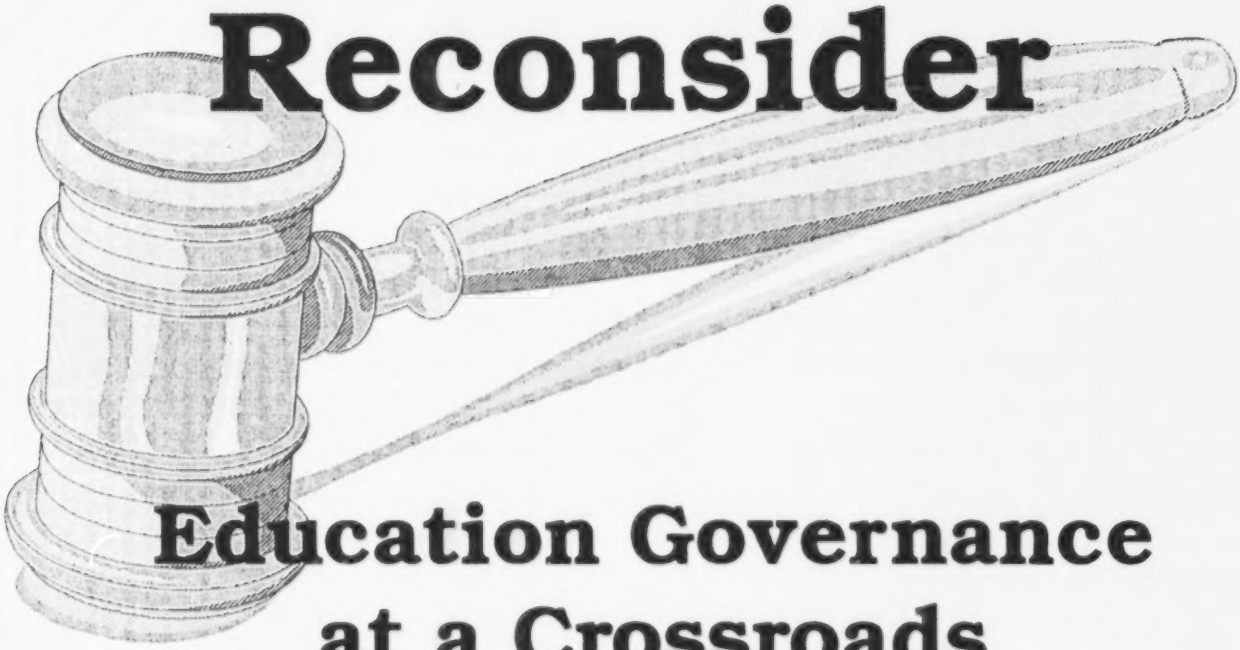
EA

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
B. WELBURN
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

NASBE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

ED 466 827

A Motion to Reconsider



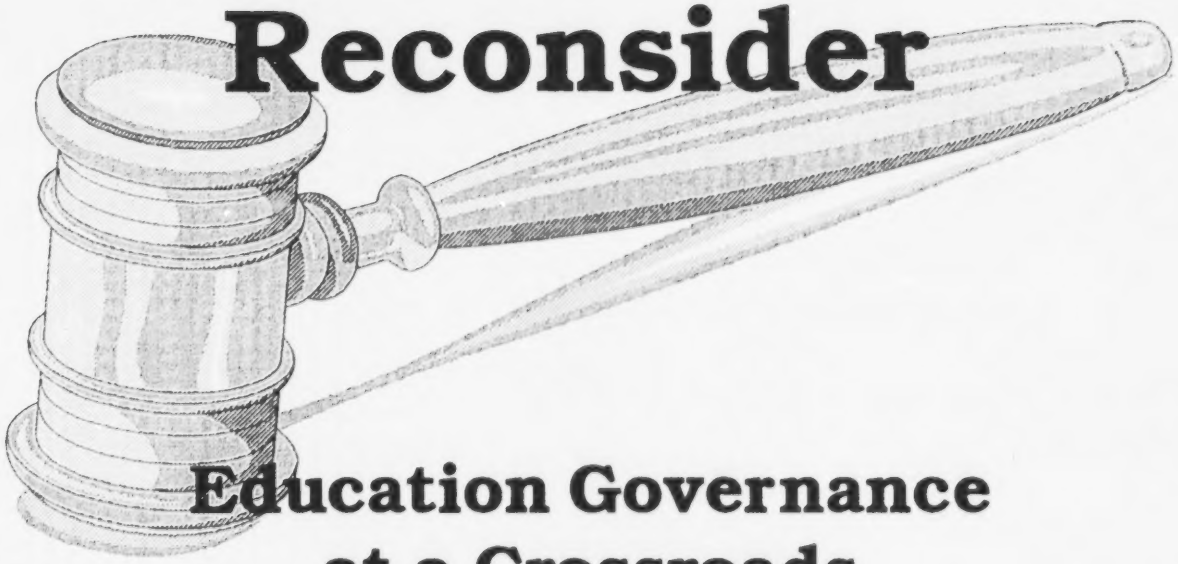
Education Governance at a Crossroads

The Report of the NASBE Study Group on Education Governance

EA 031 766

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Motion to Reconsider



Education Governance at a Crossroads

The Report of the NASBE Study Group on Education Governance

October 1996

Copyright © 1996 by the National Association of State Boards of Education. All rights reserved.
Additional copies of this report are available for $12.00 each + $2.00 shipping and handling (prepaid) from NASBE Publication, 1012 Cameron Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, (800) 220-5183.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY iii

I. EDUCATION GOVERNANCE MATTERS 1

II. GOVERNANCE DEFINED 7

III. THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP 9

IV. ATTRIBUTES OF SOUND GOVERNANCE 13

1. Designated Board of Education 13
2. Professional Management 15
3. Board Selection Process 19
4. Persons of Quality 27
5. Leadership 29
6. Communications 34
7. Devolved Authority 38
8. Collaboration 43

V. GOVERNANCE AT A CROSSROADS 47

STUDY GROUP MEMBERS AND PRESENTERS 51

STATE EDUCATION GOVERNANCE SUMMARY 53

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The erosion of public confidence in America's schools makes it imperative that state education governance structures and practices be examined periodically to determine their efficiency, representativeness, and effectiveness. Yesterday's governance solutions can become today's problems. A top-down, bottom-up governance review can ensure that state boards are doing all they can to maximize their role in leading and supporting education reform for all children and youth.

Key Findings

Structural reform is not a panacea. The NASBE Study Group on Education Governance found that educational leadership and quality of decisionmaking are more important than the particular structure of a state board. Individual state demographics and educational needs are far too varied to identify any single preferred structure of educational goverance. Experience shows that there are no "magic bullets" and that simplistic, abrupt governance "reforms" can have unintended consequences that create new difficulties, including administrative chaos and significant morale problems among dedicated educational staff.

What matters is quality of leadership. The Study Group found that effective education governance derives from *both* legal authority and intangible factors, such as the credibility and quality of board members and other key state leaders. The principal findings and recommendations of the Study Group's work were discussed within an eight-point framework describing the attributes that any form of education governance should embody. These include:

1. *A board that is dedicated to the task of education policymaking and oversight.*

2. *A professional administrator who reports to and takes direction from the education board.*

3. *A selection process for board members that ensures the board provides steady leadership, represents the general public, and is accountable to them.*

4. *A selection process that ensures each member of the board is a person of integrity who possesses leadership, decision making, and teamwork skills.*

5. *An operational process that ensures the education board actively leads with one voice in directions consistent with the goals of general purpose government.*

6. *A board that engages important stakeholders and the general public in continuous dialogue about education.*

7. *An organizing principle of granting as much autonomy as possible to the lowest possible level, as long as essential governance responsibilities are maintained through reliable methods of accountability.*

8. *An acceptance that the public education system shares responsibility to foster children's overall development.*

I. EDUCATION GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Teaching and learning are at the heart of the education enterprise. That being the case, does the way we govern public education really matter? Is working out who is in charge just a distraction from more important issues?

Governance *does* matter. After two years of research, deliberation and discussions with some of the nation's foremost thinkers about education, the NASBE Study Group on Education Governance found that how a state organizes its education governance affects how responsive public schools are to the aspirations, needs and concerns of learners, families and communities. Governance greatly impacts the quality of educational leadership, which in turn may raise or undermine teacher morale and performance, encourage or hinder innovation, and strengthen or weaken public confidence. It affects the integrity, efficiency and effectiveness of our school administrators.

Sound education governance matters a great deal for at least three important reasons: 1) restoring public confidence in public schools; 2) improving the educational performance of schools; and 3) strengthening civic society.

Restoring Public Confidence

Some people who have given up on ever improving the education system advocate dismantling and privatizing the public schools. For many years popular media that simplify complex issues and thrive on controversy have been reporting public education's shortcomings, typically presented out of context. The result of this sustained drone of negative pronouncements is a dangerously wide gap between public expectations and school performance. Admittedly, to some extent the idea of public school decay is self-induced: many education leaders and groups—including NASBE—have shouted "crisis" to stimulate needed change. Unfortunately, the resulting alienation is having a negative impact on our schools' ability to educate. Public schools have always depended on community and family support to fulfill their mission.

Among the Study Group's finding is that most public schools are in fact performing better than ever before. The widespread perception of complete failure is exaggerated. Most schools, districts, and state education agencies are being governed reasonably well. Families and employers are listened to, teachers are receiving support for quality teaching and learning, and serious efforts are underway to improve educational services. The trouble is, despite their generally good performance at satisfying traditional expectations, most public schools are not doing enough to prepare youth for the *next* century—and the public can sense it.

> "Although... there are indeed some serious problems at all levels of education, we believe that much of the current rhetoric goes well beyond assisting reform, and actually hinders it. Much of the 'crisis' commentary today professes total system wide failure in education. Our research shows that this is simply not true."
>
> *Sandia Report*

"The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expense of it."

John Adams, 1758

"Above all things, I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on this good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty."

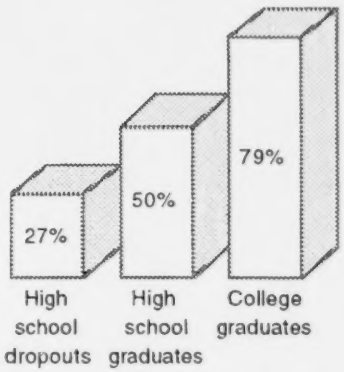
Thomas Jefferson, 1787

"It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge."

George Washington
Farewell Address, 1796

Figure 1

Percent of voters who voted in the 1992 Presidential election by educational level



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The Study Group agrees that serious problems plague too many public schools, that many schools remain mired in outdated curricula and pedagogy, and that education governance has much room for improvement. But the solution is not to abandon or dismantle public education. Public schools are the only institution whose primary goal is to educate children both to satisfy their needs and the needs of society as a whole for responsible citizens, productive workers, and caring parents. America's Founding Fathers considered universal education an essential foundation of democratic government. Dramatic differences in voting patterns among people with different levels of education prove their point (Figure 1). The need to bind people of disparate origins into one nation is as important today as it ever was. A healthy system of public education remains the best way to achieve these difficult goals.

Recent opinion research by Public Agenda, a non-profit, non-partisan organization, found that few people consider their schools "excellent" (Figure 2), but also that most are not ready to give up on public education The organization determined that people want their schools to perform better but are frustrated and confused about how to make it happen. **Clearly, public schools that are well led, well managed, and responsive to the community are essential to maintaining public trust.** Leaders with vision and energy must prove that public schools can adapt and excel. Governance matters.

"American support for public education is fragile and porous. Although many people voice initial approval of their own local public schools, this support disintegrates at the slightest probing."

Public Agenda, 1995

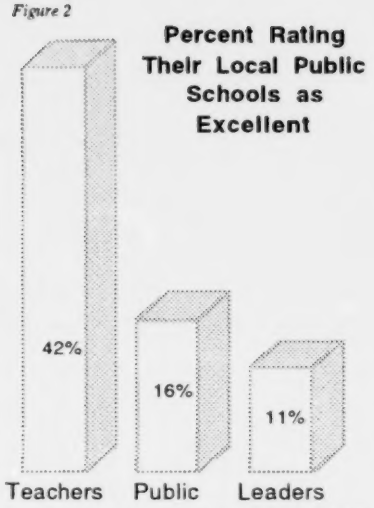
Improving Education

A lesson taught through years of accumulated experience with education reform is that an array of interrelated initiatives need pursuing almost simultaneously. Changing only one part of the system is

rarely enough to leverage improvement. Unanticipated problems typically emerge when reform is poorly coordinated. To illustrate just some of what has to be done:

- Raising educational standards requires new curriculum frameworks and academic assessment programs.
- Teaching to high standards means changing classroom instructional practices. This, in turn, requires implementing advanced learning technologies as well as restructuring professional development programs, rethinking teacher certification, and revising staff performance incentives.
- Decentralizing authority means developing new budget and financing systems and more sophisticated ways of measuring school performance.
- State education agencies need restructuring to *support* instead of *direct* local education. Methods of assuring educational quality with a minimum of regulation need to be refined.

Figure 2



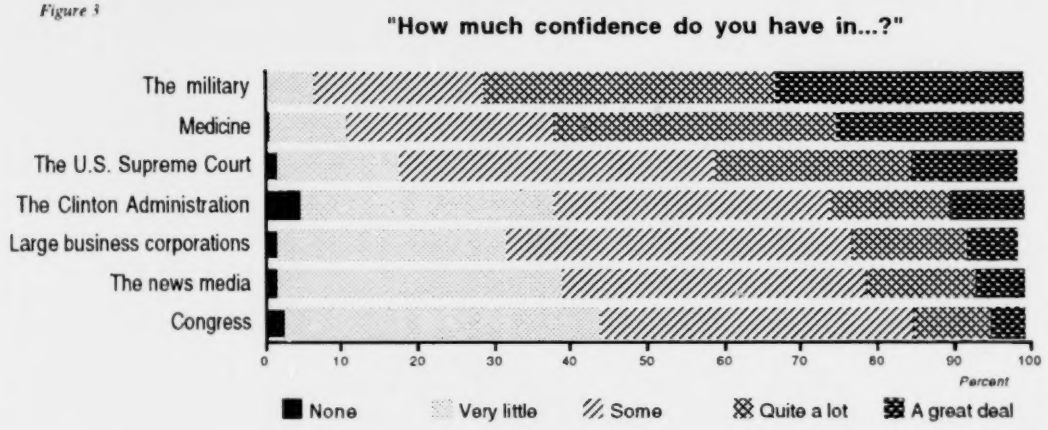
Source: 1995 Public Agenda survey

Implementing coherent, systemic improve-ment is an extremely complex challenge that requires thoughtful, enlightened and steady leadership—in sum, sound governance. Without it an education system might lurch from one faddish "reform" to the next without ever raising students' academic performance. While sound governance does not guarantee high educational achievement, its absence leads inevitably to serious problems.

The Study Group agrees that the public schools need to adjust to keep up with the times. The new global economy requires high educational standards for a satisfying life. Meanwhile, schools need to cope with students who are coming from different family circumstances than was typical in the past. Changes in society are bringing new governance challenges. For example, how one defines "community" for today's world has implications for means of assuring "local control." Advanced learning technologies that deliver education to any location present dilemmas for policymakers who are charged with assuring that every child meets high standards and has common educational experiences.

Recent movements toward consolidating categorical federal programs into flexible block grants, intended to shift authority to the state level, add to the imperative that state education governance be highly capable. Education leaders need to be able to effectively engage the rest of state government in deciding how best to allocate such funding. A coordinated approach is necessary. Governance matters.

Figure 3



Source: Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University Survey Project, 1996. "Don't know" answers are not shown.

Strengthening Civic Society

Efforts to improve education governance must take into account larger concerns about the health of democracy in America. Public education, often a reliable barometer of broader trends in society, demonstrates only the tip of the iceberg of disenchantment with government in general. Highly publicized public policy failures of recent years have led many people to conclude that nothing government touches works, or even that government causes more problems than it solves. Frustration is only compounded by the fact that democratic government may be inherently inefficient because its function is to balance competing interests and contradictory demands. People are disillusioned with government—and most other major institutions of society as well (Figure 3).

> "[My constituents] think there's something very evil going on out here, something cheap, where everybody is selling their soul. They think we cheat and steal and whore around. They think everything has gone to hell and that we feather our own nests and take care of ourselves and not them."
>
> *Senator Alan K. Simpson*
> *Republican of Wyoming*

> "Our public life has become coarser. We have become less civil, less trusting, less loving, less able to think in terms of community."
>
> *Roger Wilkins*

Think tanks heatedly debate the causes of the pervasive public alienation, but few experts are confident about recommending solutions to rebuild trust. Among the ideas mentioned are improving personal contact between political leaders and the citizenry, maintaining civility in political discourse, teaching more civics in school, and implementing "bottom-up policymaking" in which states support locally-determined solutions to problems. Clearly, **well-governed public schools are an important part of any effort to rebuild the trust and cohesiveness that are critical to healthy civic society.** So are initiatives that involve more people in local decision-making, even if reforms like school site-based management demonstrate only mixed results at improving student academic achievement.

This report of the NASBE Study Group on Education Governance contains findings that express the collective experience and knowledge of education policymakers from eighteen states who, in a series of seven meetings over two years, conducted research, consulted with noted experts, and engaged in wide-ranging discussion (members and presenters are listed at the end of this report). The Study Group has taken into account the results of experiments such as charter schools, proven lessons from the business world, and the views of thoughtful critics with constructive suggestions for improvement.

The public is demanding more efficient, effective government and is looking to state policymakers to get it right. State government is now more widely trusted than the federal government (Figures 4 and 5). Federal block grants and decentralized authority open a new era in education governance. State boards of education have a valuable opportunity to demonstrate that public institutions can work well. Education governance matters.

"Self-government [is] an activity rooted in a particular place, carried out by citizens loyal to that place and the way of life it embodies."

Socrates

"Active government is not merely inescapable but necessary... In any human community, but especially in one as large, diverse, complex and contentious as ours, government is—or should be—the institution that draws us together, maintains order, and advances the common interest. No other institution can do this..."

Essayist Jonathan Yardley

Figure 4

"Which do you trust to do a better job running things?"

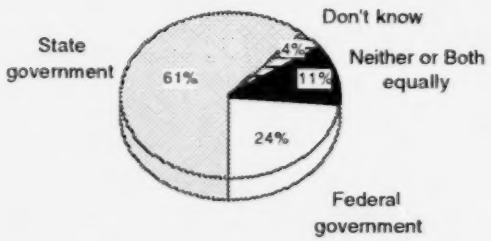
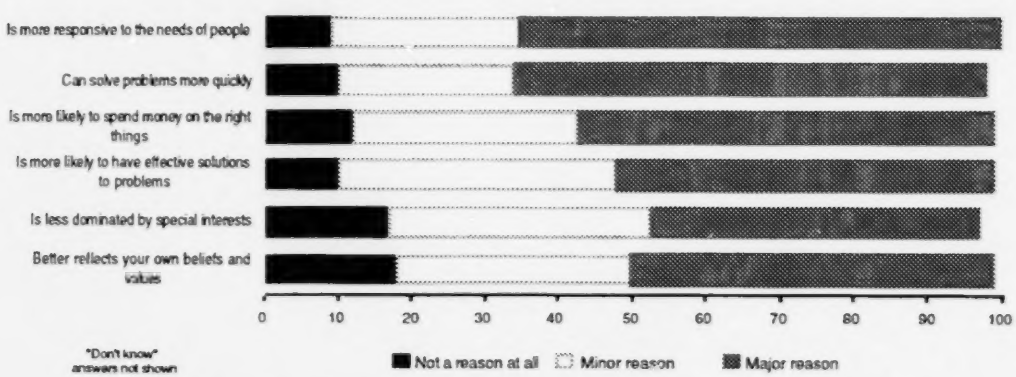


Figure 5

Asked of those who trust their state government more, "Why?"



Source of both charts: Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University Survey Project, 1996.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"Critics often complain about the 'fat' bureaucracies in education. But when one looks closely at the evidence, one sees that such complaints can't be supported for education as a whole. Across the country, central-office professionals constitute only 1.6 percent of the staffing of public school districts... Principals, assistant principals, and other supervisors in the schools make up another 2.9 percent of the staff. By comparison with other sectors of the economy, this figure is remarkably *small*...

"Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on the numbers of supervisors, executives, administrators, or managers per employee in nine sectors of the economy average 7.1 employees per administrator. In contrast, education has *twice* that rate—14.5 employees per supervisor... The average school superintendent in this country is responsible for 2,700 students, 291 staff members, and a budget of over 14 million dollars... Yet, when compared with industry, the level of compensation for these positions of leadership and responsibility in education is really quite modest."

David Berliner and Bruce Biddle
The Manufactured Crisis, 1995

11

II. EDUCATION GOVERNANCE DEFINED

Governance is not the same as management. Those in governance positions determine education goals, while administrative managers determine how best to achieve the goals. State governing authorities decide what subjects schools will teach, and administrators work out the best way to staff, supply and support schools and districts. In practice, however, the line distinguishing governance from management is typically blurred. For the sake of this report, the Study Group defines governance as:

> *The institutions, process, and authority to exercise leadership, establish goals and standards, adopt policies that guide and direct, evaluate performance, and administer rewards or sanctions.*

In short, governance is leadership, broad policy making, and general oversight. Education governance might be spelled out in the state constitution or in the education code adopted by the legislature. Each state's governance arrangements are unique, although most use one of four general models (Figure 6). Local school boards are technically agents of the state.

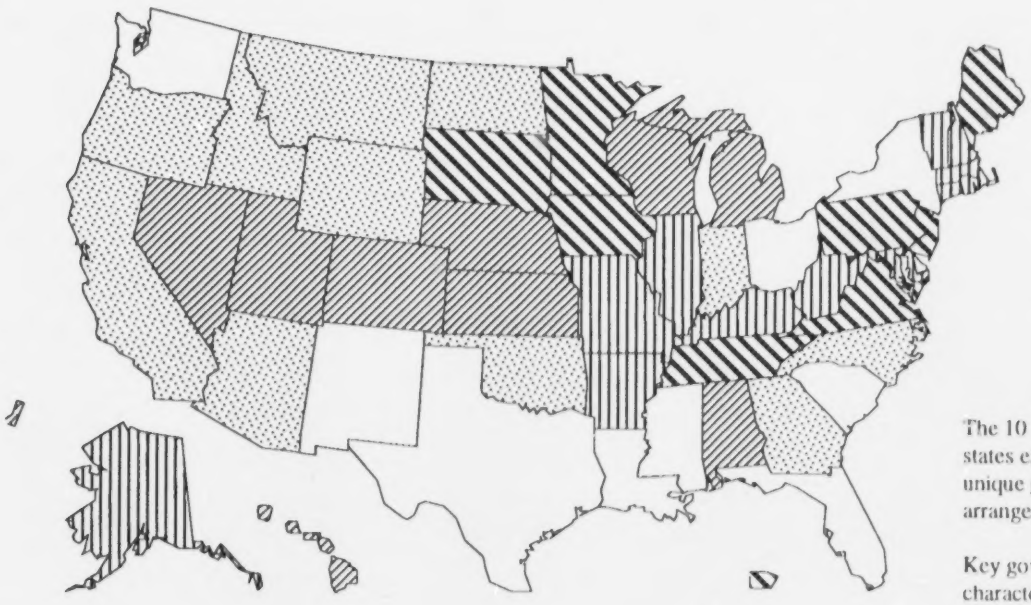
Regardless of structure, governance effectiveness derives from both legal standing and less tangible factors such as credibility and leadership. Efforts to improve education governance might range from smoothing out a working relationship between key individuals to passing a state constitutional amendment.

The extent of parents' rights in the governance of their children's education is presently a hot topic in many places, including the U.S. Congress and several states. Balancing individual rights and the state's responsibility to ensure an educated citizenry is an ever-present issue throughout America. While the Study Group recognizes that families have primary responsibility for the education of their children, **states are constitutionally charged, and therefore bear responsibility, to provide all children with access to high quality education delivered in the most effective and efficient manner possible.** This report takes as its starting point that constitutional charge.

Education governance is primarily a state and local function, but the federal government exerts a powerful influence on education governance at all levels. The U.S. Department of Education provides leadership on emerging issues, sponsors basic education research, guarantees the rights of every student to education and contributes a small percentage of the total cost of public education, although it does not directly govern schools other than those operated by the Department of Defense. Federal education programs are now mostly administered in ways that provide flexibility to states and districts, but federal laws still require education services that Washington does not fully fund. Furthermore, the federal government's share of the total cost of public education has decreased in recent years, even though the actual dollar amount is higher than ever.

Figure 6

State Education Governance Models



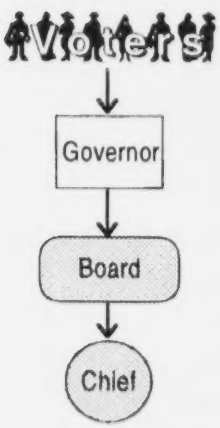
The 10 non-shaded states each have a unique governance arrangement.

Key governance characteristics of every state are summarized at the end of this report.

Model I

Governor appoints Board, Board appoints Chief*

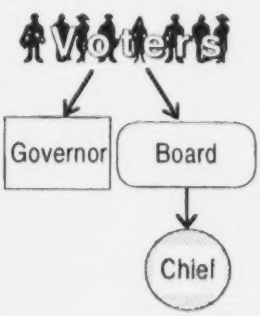
13 states



Model II

Elected board appoints Chief

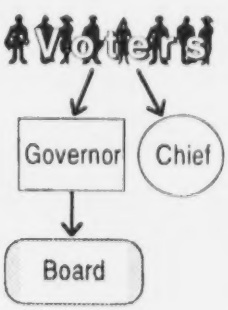
8 states, DC and Guam



Model III

Governor appoints Board; independently elected Chief

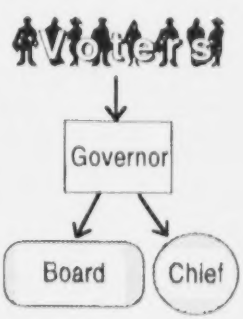
11 states



Model IV

Governor appoints both Board and Chief

8 states and Puerto Rico



* Chief State School Officer, such as the State Superintendent or Commissioner of Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

III. THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP

When critics search for what or whom to blame for the perceived failures of the public schools, governance is among "the usual suspects." A change in governance structure is frequently hyped as the "magic bullet" that can single-handedly stimulate self-sustaining reform: "If only *X* would be more accountable to *Y*, the system would respond and improve." A major attraction of concentrating on governance is that changes usually cost the taxpayers nothing extra.

Yet **the Study Group concluded that governance structure, as opposed to quality of leadership, is rarely the central problem with poor school performance.** Structural reform is not a panacea. Eager reformers must accept that magic bullets do not exist, that raising academic standards will be a long, difficult slog with hard decisions to make and plenty of controversy along the way.

The Study Group emphasizes that proposals for change need to respond to real problems and embrace real opportunities. Education cannot be improved with abrupt governance changes that merely alter the political power balance, react to exaggerated problems, tinker with the organizational chart, impose ideological conformity, are not thoroughly considered, or have a narrow base of public support. Experience also proves that short-sighted public relations exercises and simplistic governance "reforms" can have unintended consequences that create new difficulties including administrative chaos and staff morale problems. The public can sense the difference between uplifting change and merely the appearance of action.

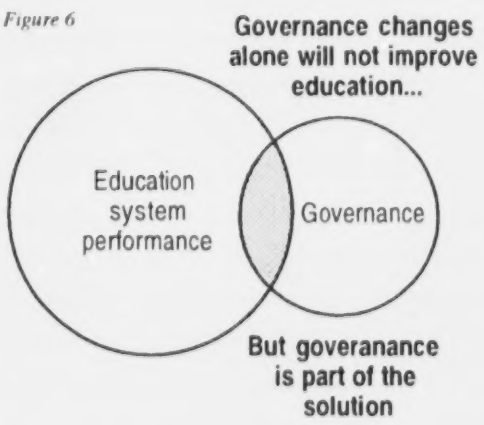
Governance reform alone cannot improve public education—but sound governance is an important part of any solution.

"For every complex issue there is a simple solution, which is wrong."
H.L. Mencken

"Be realistic about complexity. The pressure from advocates (pro and con) can combine with the pressure of [media] editors for simple answers to produce a black-and-white, good-or-bad world. Neal Pierce, the columnist, likes to say there are only two stories: Gee Whiz and Gosh Awful. That's unreal. Evaluators should expect to find, as legislators find, good and bad together; a world of shadings. 'The truth is rarely pure and never simple.'"
Ted Kolderie
Center for Policy Studies

"The highways of American education are littered with the wrecks of bandwagons."
Anonymous

Figure 6


Governance changes alone will not improve education...
Education system performance
Governance
But goveranance is part of the solution

Is There an Ideal System?

When the Study Group first met in January 1995, its members immediately decided to take a fresh look at every aspect of governance, without *any* preconceptions. They began without even assuming a need for a state board of education. The group envisioned a public education system in which every student is given the chance and the necessary support to excel, and then worked back to determine what form of education governance would be most likely to move the system in that direction.

> "While education governance structures are important, they should be viewed as vehicles to advance the state's values and goals; the governance structure should not drive the system. Instead, the governance structure should facilitate achieving the state's education priorities, and reaching consensus on these priorities is a major challenge facing state policy makers."
>
> *Indiana Education Policy Center*

The Study Group quickly determined that states and their needs vary too much to identify a preferred structure of education governance that would excel everywhere. Upon close examination the various existing governance models all provide examples of good, bad, and indifferent governance at various times. Distinct models fit different state demographic profiles, circumstances and historical traditions.

Quality of Leadership, Not Structure

Debates over education governance typically focus on structural issues such as the best size and composition of a board of education, who has how much authority over what, how many levels of governance are appropriate, or ideal jurisdictional sizes. For example, the Study Group discussed the problems posed by unwieldy and highly bureaucratic large city school districts, and by the great many small school districts that seem difficult to justify (Michigan has 530 school districts, New Jersey has 600, and Illinois has 950). But the Study Group concluded that appropriate jurisdictional sizes and boundaries are decisions that must necessarily vary from place to place.

These kind of structural issues are indeed important. Yet the Study Group found that sound governance can be organized different ways. Conversely, they also found that a neat organizational chart does not guarantee sound governance. The Study Group concluded that what really matters is **structure, individual people, and political culture, considered together as a whole.** A delicately balanced combination of positive qualities in these dimensions should result in a governance system that efficiently responds to the needs of families and the needs of society.

Rather than recommend a specific structure, the Study Group determined that, regardless of the particular form of education governance a state adopts, there are certain attributes *any* form ought to incorporate:

> "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times."
>
> *Inscribed in the Jefferson Memorial*

1. A board that is dedicated to the task of education policymaking and oversight.

2. A professional administrator who reports to and takes direction from the education board.

3. A selection process for board members that ensures the board provides steady leadership, represents the general public, and is accountable to them.

4. A selection process that ensures each member of the board is a person of integrity who possesses leadership, decision making, and teamwork skills.

5. An operational process that ensures the education board actively leads with one voice in directions consistent with the goals of general purpose government.

6. A board that engages important stakeholders and the general public in continuous dialogue about education.

7. An organizing principle of granting as much autonomy as possible to the lowest possible level, as long as essential governance responsibilities are maintained through reliable methods of accountability.

8. An acceptance that the public education system shares responsibility to foster children's overall development.

The dedicated efforts of innumerable educators to upgrade and modernize their schools must be supported by the way education is governed. The Study Group agrees with many critics that constructive change is needed to improve education governance in many places—though by no means all. Periodically reviewing education governance to assess its efficiency, representativeness, and effectiveness is healthy. Indeed, yesterday's governance solutions can become today's problems. The Study Group, therefore, encourages state boards to pass "a motion to reconsider" and conduct an unbiased bottom-up governance review.

The challenge of leadership is to establish education governance that enlists thoughtful people who are willing to wrestle long and hard with complex issues. To help ensure the validity of proposed reforms, the Study Group suggests that governance reviews be conducted by "blue ribbon" commissions of concerned, impartial citizens who can be counted on to make recommendations that are based on long-term community needs and not short-term political expediency. Grounded in the present, they can point the way to the future.

This report provides background, analysis and recommendations concerning each of the eight attributes listed above. The information and advice are offered with the hope that they will help state policymakers evaluate education governance and promote sensible refinements.

IV. ATTRIBUTES OF SOUND GOVERNANCE

1. DESIGNATED BOARD OF EDUCATION

A board that is dedicated to the task of education policymaking and oversight.

Every state constitution calls for a state system of public schools. A long tradition in American government is to delegate policymaking authority over education, within legislative or constitutional guidelines, to boards of education. Custom aside, however, there are several practical reasons why education governance ought to be in the hands of a policy board with defined responsibilities:

- A dedicated board that is able to focus on challenging issues in great depth is more likely to make informed decisions, adopt policies that are internally consistent and coherent, and provide continuity in oversight.
- A multi-member board enhances and broadens citizen representation, making it more likely that education proposals will be broadly acceptable to the public.
- Board members can help bring a long term perspective on education into the political process. They are valuable advocates within government for the interests of children and youth, and for the overall educational needs of society.
- An education board can help buffer leaders of general purpose government from controversy and free them from the details of education governance.
- Board members with broad vision and "common sense" can often predict unanticipated pitfalls and unintended consequences of otherwise attractive proposals.

Most public schools are governed by boards of education at the state and local levels instead of by general purpose government for these reasons. There are also historical reasons for the division of responsibility—largely to protect schools from corruption—that are still valid today in some places.

The Study Group does not insist that education be a policy board's *sole* responsibility. Minnesota's new Department of Children, Families and Learning incorporates its former Department of Education. Other states' inter-agency councils and "children's cabinets" are intriguing experiments in collaborative governance aimed at reducing fragmentation in the delivery of government services.

> "A cherished American tradition is that the final decision-making authority over important institutions, especially those that spend substantial amount of public money for a recognized and vital public service, be reserved to boards selected in a manner provided by law."
>
> *Tom Shannon*
> *National School Boards Association*

Regardless of how a state chooses to allocate authority for education governance, the various responsibilities of the different people and entities who are involved need to be clearly defined and well understood by all. NASBE divides the typical work of state boards of education into four main types. Although the Study Group agrees with management experts who recommend that boards spend about two-thirds of their time on strategy and policymaking direct observation finds that the average board spends nearly two-thirds of its time on "administrivia" and twice the recommended amount of time on ceremonial duties.

The Nature of State Board Work

Level I:	Long term strategies to address the state's most pressing problems in education.
Level II:	Policy formulation, evaluation, and adjustments.
Level III:	Immediate decisions, obligatory approvals, and presentations about the education agency's work.
Level IV:	Extraneous information, ceremonies, awards.

Evaluating Your Board Meeting

The issues covered today were:
trivial 1 2 3 4 5 essential

The materials provided were:
worthless 1 2 3 4 5 indispensable

Today's discussion concerned primarily:
operations 1 2 3 4 5 policy & strategy

What was the most valuable contribution we made to education today?

What might have been done differently to improve the meeting?

What are the most important topics we should address at our next meeting?

NASBE New Board Member Institute

2. PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

A professional administrator who reports to and takes direction from the board of education.

The Study Group concluded that the governance model successfully used by most corporations, institutions of higher education, and foundations is also a sound one for public education. In this model a CEO (chief executive officer), who is an experienced professional manager, is hired by and answers to a governing board. The board determines broad policy directions, is responsible for general oversight, and is accountable to shareholders or trustees. Translating this model into the context of public education, the equivalent of the CEO at the state level is the chief state school officer (CSSO), or at the local level, the superintendent of schools, who is an experienced professional. The governing board that hires and evaluates the top administrator is the state board of education.

Three reasons why an education system's top administrator should be hired by and held accountable to an education board, rather than be independently elected or appointed, are enhanced policy coherence, assured professionalism, and stable administration. These are explained below:

Coherent Policymaking

Competing power centers can emerge if the top administrator and the board are both authorized to make and implement policies. The public is ill-served when governance is fragmented this way. Although competition among ideas and approaches is necessary and healthy, and an accountable board of education needs to encourage full examination and debate of important issues, policymaking is ill-served when it results in dissension or competition between a board and its administration. Unproductive rivalries, inefficiencies, frustration, finger-pointing, distractions, stalemate, and drift that benefit nobody are common by-products of this kind of two-headed system.

Professional education officials have a valuable role in drafting policy and working with their board of education to establish the board agenda. However, the final authority on policy decisions properly belongs with the board. The public demands that the buck stop somewhere, that the final responsibility for the performance of the public schools rest with an identifiable entity. That entity should be a board of education as defined in this report.

Professional, Non-Political Administration

When an education administrator is an elected official, and/or answers directly to a governor or legislature, an agency can become distracted with subtle (or overt) pressures to advance party doctrines or election efforts. This type of politicization in its worse sense contributes to public cynicism, mistrust and alienation. A public education administrator must be perceived as a professional who holds to the highest standards and stays focused on education matters. Avoiding direct participation in partisan politics is critical to maintaining this perception. The necessary tasks of political and legislative advocacy should instead be undertaken by or under the direction of the education board.

Stable Administration

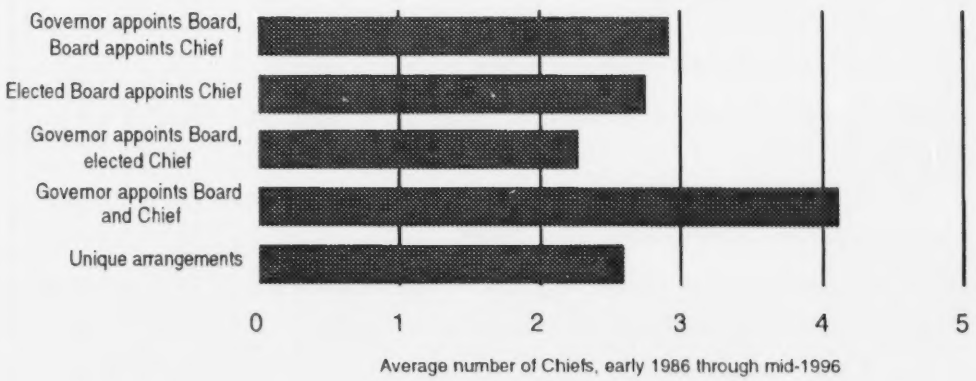
The Study Group found the rapid turnover rate of chief state school officers in recent years to be a serious cause for concern. Frequent administrative upheavals hinder efficient management and long-term school improvement efforts. It is reasonable to expect that a newly appointed chief might take several years to master a complex administration.

Figure 8 illustrates the average number of CSSO's since 1986, by governance model. Is is interesting to note that **by far the greatest turnover occurs where authority is centralized in the governor's office.** In the eight states in which the governor appoints both chiefs and boards, seven are on their fourth CSSO since 1986 and the eighth is on its fifth CSSO. In contrast, among all the other 42 states only another seven have had as many as four chiefs, and none have had five. The lowest average rate of turnover occurs in states with elected chiefs, which might be attributable to their fixed terms or the advantages of incumbency.

The Study Group considers the trend away from the election of chief state school officers during this century a positive development for effective governance. In 1900, 31 of 45 states elected the CSSO: today this is down to 15 of 50* (Figures 9 and 10). At the local district level, only a very small percentage of superintendents nationwide are elected.

Figure 8

Average Number of Chief State School Officers Since 1986 by Governance Model



* The fifteen include the eleven Model III states plus four of the states with unique governance structures.

Selecting an Administrator

A governing body's essential duties with regard to the administrative officer it selects and directs are to:

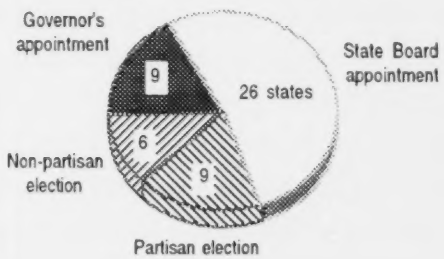
- ✓ define the minimum competencies of the administrator;
- ✓ delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of the board and the administrator;
- ✓ establish criteria for evaluating the administrator's performance; and
- ✓ apply that criteria in scheduled performance evaluations.

Even though at least seven states mandate it, the Study Group concluded that an education agency's top administrator does not necessarily need academic training or prior work experience in education to be effective. As long as the administrator can rely on professional educators for the necessary advice, managerial competence is more critical than a background in education.

The Study Group found nothing wrong in principle with a state allowing local school districts to contract out management services, whether with for-profit companies or non-profit organizations, *as long as* each board of education has the necessary legal and administrative capacity to handle complex contracts, and the board conscientiously fulfills its oversight responsibilities.

Figure 9

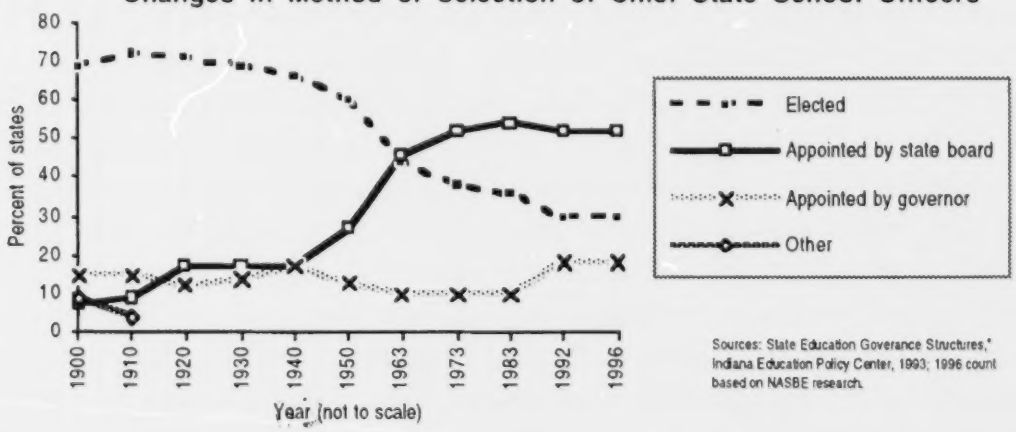
How Chief State School Officers are Selected, 1996



The Study Group believes that a state board of education needs the support of its own independent staff to effectively exercise its policymaking and oversight functions. A state board executive who must answer to both the board and the education agency is

Figure 10

Changes in Method of Selection of Chief State School Officers



Sources: State Education Goverance Structures," Indiana Education Policy Center, 1993; 1996 count based on NASBE research.

in an untenable position that makes it difficult the maintain the trust and confidence of either one. Duplication of functions should, however, be avoided.

Micromanagement

Administering an education system in a professional manner requires that a governing board not intrude into the day-to-day responsibilities of its chosen manager. Boards must concentrate on strategy and policy issues and avoid matters best left to specialized expertise. Non-policy administrative issues on which a board might be required to act, such as purchase orders, waiver requests or grant applications, should be relegated to the routine consent agenda, assuming that the board has confidence the agency is performing its duties with competence and integrity. Governing boards in other sectors of society rarely deal with these issues.

Some state boards of education have the power to appoint or confirm other high level administrators to work under the CSSO. Typically, this is a reaction to some imbalance in the governance system and seems justified by a need to offset an excess of authority being exercised by someone other than the board. Such an imbalance should be corrected because the situation is ripe for conflict. Efficient administration requires that a board respect and honor a CSSO's personnel decisions. A system of sound education governance that embodies the attributes described in this report can greatly minimize this kind of harmful distortion.

3. BOARD SELECTION PROCESS

A selection process for board members that ensures the board provides steady leadership, represents the general public, and is accountable to them.

If it is to be effective, a board of education must cultivate its credibility with the public, other government leaders, and the education administration. Credibility is maintained through a blend of official authority, accomplishments and reputation. But perhaps the most important factors are the board's membership and composition. This is why the selection process for the members of a board is so critically important. Whether or not an education board has oversight over other human services as well, a sound process aims to achieve several goals: representation, accountability, and sustained leadership.

Representation

The steadily changing demographics of the nation are bringing complex new governance challenges. Increasingly, the characteristics and interests of those who are most likely to be involved in selecting board members are not the same as the characteristics and interests of families with children in school. For example, young families are less likely to be white and less prosperous than those who are most likely to vote. In response, some people argue that if a board of education's decisions are to be perceived as fair, the board needs to closely match the demographic characteristics of the population in terms of geographic location, class, gender, culture, race/ethnicity, occupation, age, political affiliation, or other factors.

- Only 24 percent of adults have school-aged children.
- Just 6 percent of households fit the traditional image of father working while mother tends the home and children.
- The over-85 age group is the fastest growing segment of the population.
- One of every four voters is a member of the American Association of Retired People (AARP).
- Nationwide, the proportion of white state board members increased from 75 to 80 percent between 1991 and 1996.

Matched representation can be critical for credibility if a group of people believes that only a policymaker who shares their characteristics will be sensitive to their needs and concerns. People of a traditionally powerless community might argue that only a board member with their same perspective will be able to adopt realistic policies that work with their children. Business people might say in a similar way that only another person in business can adequately explain employers' needs for skilled graduates. In response to these kinds of pressures, some states mandate different kinds of board diversity: one explicitly requires that the state board include a "minority" group member, at least six require a currently employed educator, eighteen others *prohibit* any educators, and several require that business representatives sit on the board. (Key characteristics of each state's governance system are summarized at the end of this report.)

The Study Group recommends against codifying any kind of designated seats or quotas to

fill governing boards, however well-intentioned, for several reasons:

1) Categorizing people by their outward characteristics appears to rule out the possibility that well-informed, fair-minded policymakers can effectively represent the interests of people of different backgrounds;

2) Preconditions constrain the assembly of a well-balanced and cohesive board; and

3) Forced representation can hinder consensus-building, because people who answer to narrow constituencies are less likely to be willing to compromise.

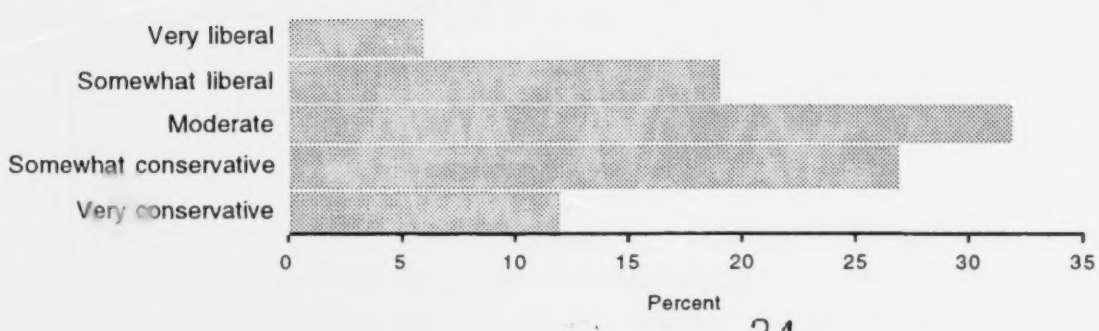
Nevertheless, as is often noted, "perception is reality" and "appearances matter." The Study Group believes that an education board that reflects the variety of people in its community is more likely to be an effective board. And, in addition to the benefit of building greater credibility with a wider public, the corporate world has found that greater diversity among employees' backgrounds positively contributes to improved overall group performance.

Balance on a board is best achieved through a thoughtful selection process, not by following predetermined guidelines. Anyone who selects people to boards of education—whether the governor, the legislature, or the voters themselves—must pick people who can be widely perceived as being able to effectively represent the best interests of *every* child, parent, employer and taxpayer.

The Study Group further emphasizes that a selection process should not allow a board to be dominated by the members of any single-interest group that represents only a segment of the public. Education governance requires the development of broad consensus on important issues, both internally and among the public, not the imposition of any type of ideology on the education system. Although a board selection process has to ensure that differing ideas are brought to the board, the board's decisions must ultimately resonate with people in "the sensible center" if its initiatives are to make lasting improvements (Figure 11).

An education board that does not reflect the population would be wise to consciously compensate for the imbalance. The board should go out of its way to assure that people throughout the community feel that their interests are being represented. Some techniques include:

How Americans Describe Their Political Views in 1996



24

- Holding hearings in underrepresented areas;
- Cultivating regular contact with community leaders;
- Meeting with underrepresented groups; and
- Creating advisory groups to provide information and advice.

However, people will feel patronized and dissension will increase if particular groups sense that their views are being solicited *pro forma* and not taken seriously.

Accountability

The Study Group found numerous ways to assure that education board members are held accountable for the results of their decisions. Common to all is the presumption that every board member wants to serve another term and will therefore consistently work to satisfy those who select board members (i.e., voters, governors, and/or legislatures).

Many are convinced that elections for education board members are the best way to guarantee direct accountability to the people. But faith in the power of democracy needs to be tempered with a critical look at how well any particular electoral system is functioning. The Study Group found that how a system is structured can reduce or enhance full representation on an elected education board. This, in turn, can have a direct effect on its accountability. For example, statewide or citywide voting can defuse the influence of minority groups. Alternatives proposed by various experts include single-member district voting, proportional representation, confirmation votes following appointments, or "weighted preference" balloting whereby a voter can either distribute votes among various candidates to fill several seats or concentrate multiple votes on one candidate.

An elected board's actual degree of accountability to the public also depends on how active and informed the voters are. Situations of seriously low voter turnout or voter inattention allow well organized groups who can mobilize supporters to hold disproportionate power over an education system. Unfortunately, practical solutions to the serious problem of voter apathy are few and far between. Indeed, many are calling this a crisis of democracy.

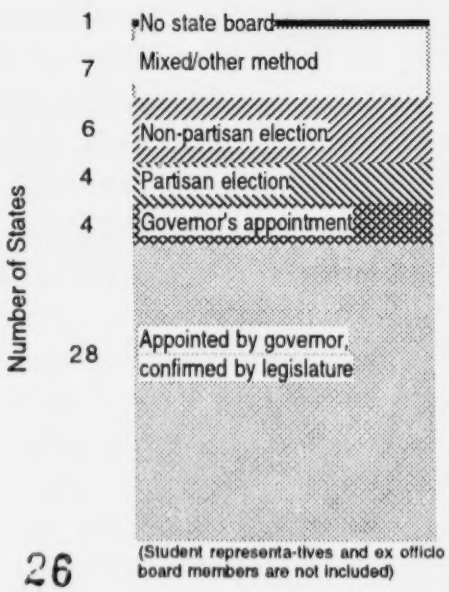
Another, albeit less direct way to assure public accountability, is to fill an education board with members who are appointed and/or confirmed by political leaders who are themselves elected. This is the method used by the largest number of states to select state board of education members (Figure 12). Among the presumed advantages of an appointment process is that it helps to better align the education system with the goals of general purpose government, and allows a governor to assemble a board with overall balance and cohesiveness. A disadvantage is the lack of a check if a state's leadership institutions are temporarily dominated by one party or ideology.

Other states use still additional approaches to assure state board accountability. Ohio and New Mexico recently joined Louisiana and Mississippi with boards that mix both elected and appointed members. Florida's entire board consists entirely of *ex officio* elected officials, while Wisconsin has long relied on an elected state superintendent to govern its schools without any state board. Utah's complex system for selecting state board of education members is intended to combine the advantages of direct elections *and* appointment. The Governor appoints nominating committees in each congressional district, who, in turn, screen and select two candidates for the election ballot.

The Study Group did not conclude that any one selection process is inherently superior to another in regards to accountability. Yet there are always people who believe that their form of governance is not accountable enough. After every general election, several states debate restructuring education governance. Even as Wisconsin recently decided to establish a state board of education, for example, several states were considering abolishing theirs.* Boards get larger and smaller, and shift between elected and appointed and then back again, demonstrating that "the grass is always greener on the other side."

Figure 12

How State Board Members are Selected



Sustained Leadership

Perhaps the greatest ongoing governance challenge is to devise the most widely acceptable balance between short-term political accountability and steady leadership for long-term development. Accountability demands that education governance be responsive to major changes in public opinion. However, inaccurate public perceptions can very quickly shift political winds in damaging directions. Drastic or sudden policy

* Wisconsin's governance restructuring law was declared unconstitutional, and most of the recent efforts in other states were defeated or abandoned.

changes, educational fads, and other quick fixes can do more harm than good over time. Education boards, therefore, also need to provide a certain amount of continuity if administrative chaos is not to interfere with classroom learning. A stable vision for education is particularly important when a major school improvement initiative attempts significant change throughout an entire education system. Reform measures can take a number of years to develop, obtain support, implement, and evaluate.

Fixed terms for board members are a basic way of building leadership continuity, because change is therefore infrequent and predictable. Furthermore, the rate at which change occurs on education boards can be moderated through the use of lengthy terms (Figure 13) and staggered terms. Many states stagger board terms so that all a governor's appointments are not concurrent with a particular governor's term in office. When one considers that the recent National Education Summit was thought necessary because only five of the fifty governors at the 1989 National Education Summit were still in office in 1996, the need for state boards to help provide continuity in educational leadership becomes very apparent.

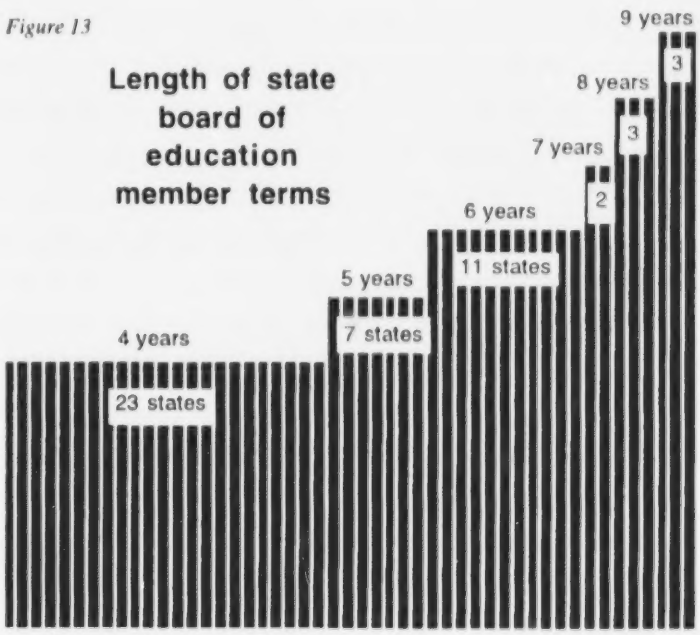
The Study Group believes that each jurisdiction must decide for itself the degree to which a board should be immediately responsive to shifts in public opinion. The member selection process can then be tailored to achieve the desired goal.

Politics and Board Member Selection

Even though a large portion of the public today holds negative perceptions of anything involving politics, completely insulating education boards from the political process would be a mistake. The schools would quickly lose public support, and would be less accountable for results.

Some critics argue that the historical separation of authority between education and general purpose government has made public schools less accountable to the body politic (box, next page). If this is true with any board, it is not because it has a distinct set of responsibilities but because its member selection process is not enough a part of the to-and-fro of participatory politics. The solution is to repair the selection process so that it is more political.

Figure 13



* Transition terms and student and ex officio member terms not included

Policymakers who are assessing education governance must assure that an education board is a political institution in the best sense of the term. A major strength of our competitive party political system is its general ability to translate collective public opinion into widely accepted laws and policies. Board members who are selected need to be able to swim with the political currents if public education is not to be stranded high and dry. The board as a whole has to stay in the political mainstream, steering far enough away from the rapids of intense partisan struggle that it can resist making decisions that are politically expedient but not educationally sound.

> "[The separation of education from general governance] created an anaerobic political environment in which the self-serving practices of educators would thrive and interest-group deal-making would flourish... [Public schools are] walled off from conventional political leadership, shielded from any real competition, [and] practically immune to the wishes and worries of their clients."
>
> *Chester Finn*
> *Educational Excellence Network*

The Study Group finds that achieving this balance requires thoughtful, bipartisan leadership. At the state level, a legislative confirmation process for a governor's appointees is one means used to make it less likely that a state board of education will be fractiously divided along partisan lines or dominated by a single interest group. Another strategy used by four states is to mandate a political balance on the state board (although the Study Group recommends against any such mandate). With an elected board, the electoral system must be functioning well in order to assure that a wide range of public opinion is genuinely represented.

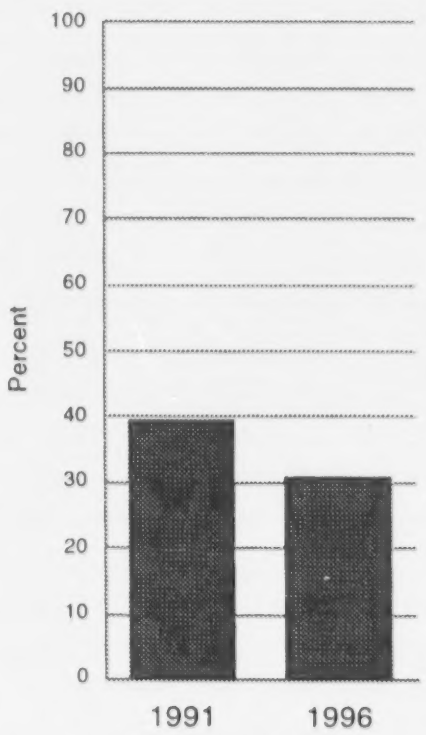
Term Limits

One change initiative the nation has thoroughly debated in recent years is term limits. At least ten states now limit state board of education members to terms that range from six to twelve years. In the opinion of the Study Group, term limits unnecessarily constrain the selection of the best people to sit on an education board.

Yet the concept of term limits for state board of education members is almost irrelevant. State boards demonstrate tremendous rates of turnover *without* term limits. NASBE research found that fewer than 31 percent of members on state boards of education at the beginning of 1996 were on their boards five years previously (Figure 14). Veteran members represent a majority of the board in only nine states. Seven states have *no* members with five years of experience.

Figure 14

Percent of State Board of Education Members with Five Years of Service



Student representatives and ex officio officials not included.

28

Furthermore, the high rate of turnover has been increasing. In 1991, 39 percent of state board members nationwide had been on their boards five or more years.

The Study Group had to conclude that the problem of *too few* people staying on boards long enough is currently more important than the perceived problem of people staying too long. A high rate of member turnover causes a lack of continuity and "institutional memory" which can inhibit a board's ability to provide steady leadership. One unanti-cipated result can be a *de facto* transfer of power to permanent agency staff who have advantages of experience and detailed knowledge. A balance between seasoned veterans and "new blood" should be among the aims of those who select board members.

High board member turnover rates highlight the need for the constant stream of new members to receive adequate orientation and professional development in boardsmanship skills. The Study Group urges every education board to assure that all its members receive the preparation they need to make wise decisions.

What Selection Process is Best?

Some observers are convinced that a good quality state board of education is most likely to result from a process of gubernatorial appointment with confirmation by a legislative body that allows public scrutiny of a person's qualifications and work style. Such an assertion is difficult to prove: board performance cannot be objectively measured. A NASBE analysis failed to find any correlation between state governance models and the rate of turnover on state boards over the last ten years. Nor could an attempt to compare student academic performance with a governance model hope to control for all the other factors that affect student performance.

The Study Group does not therefore recommend one particular member selection method over another. Elected and appointed boards both offer numerous examples of excellent and poor board members, people who work diligently to incorporate the views of the entire community, and people who represent only narrow interests. The most appropriate selection process for a state must necessarily vary due to differences in political traditions, cultural features, population size, geography, and other factors that make every state unique.

A comment repeated by several people who addressed the Study Group, and endorsed by the full group, is that **the particular method of selecting education board members matters less than the quality of the people who are selected.** What is critically important today is that the public's trust in education governance be restored, which can only happen if boards of education are composed of outstanding citizens who are perceived to genuinely represent everyone's best interests. Any selection process must be designed with this end result clearly in mind.

Following are some questions those selecting board members might wish to ask (whether a governor, a legislator, a political analyst, or a voter):

- ✓ Would the candidate bring a valuable and needed perspective to the board?
- ✓ Would the candidate add to a healthy balance on the board in terms of
  - community representation?
  - rich experience
  - fresh ideas?
  - representation of different political viewpoints?
- ✓ Does the candidate have personal integrity and the temperament for board work (see next section)?

4. PERSONS OF QUALITY

Each member of the board of education is a person of high standards who possesses leadership, decision making, and teamwork skills.

Experience repeatedly demonstrates that a person can be a dedicated activist, a well respected expert, or a masterful campaigner yet turn out to be an unsuccessful member of an education policy board. The qualities that get someone selected to sit on a board are not necessarily the ones needed for sound governance.

The Study Group's conception of an ideal education board member might fit a job description similar to that on the next page. The great challenge is to find people who can be both consensus-builders *and* courageous proponents of needed change. Although precious few people meet all of the qualifications, those responsible for selecting board members, whether they are voters, governors or legislators, should consider these points.

It is important to note that this list of general qualities still allows much latitude for people of different passions, viewpoints, personalities, and backgrounds. Boards composed of dissimilar people are more likely to experience healthy, wide-ranging discussions with greater depth and breadth.

Every education board member will eventually encounter an uncomfortable personal dilemma that is inherent to our form of government. Should a policymaker primarily work to satisfy the constituents who selected him/her, or present the views and interests of one constituents but make decisions based on informed personal judgment? Recognizing that the realities of politics sometimes leave no choice, the Study Group nevertheless expects that all board of education members will have the strength, wisdom and courage to make the hard decisions that are in the best interests of all.

"The test of leadership is not to say to your people what they always like to hear. The test of real leadership is to put your capital on the table and to call it like it is."

Randall Robinson
President, TransAfrica

"Public-spirited Americans who serve on boards of education deserve the gratitude of their fellow citizens, who sometimes take such service for granted."

National Association of Secondary School Principals

"Any old mule can kick down a rotten barn, but only a skilled carpenter can rebuild it."

Anonymous

Student Members

The Study Group agrees that student board members can serve as a valuable window into what happens day-to-day in schools. As the ultimate "consumers" of the education enterprise, students can offer "reality checks" of how their peers are likely to perceive and react to new policies. Young people also often provide fresh perspectives. Four state boards of education have student representatives holding full participation and voting privileges (California, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Tennessee). Six others have students who sit on the board but do not vote. The District of Columbia's student member votes only on the Student Services Committee. Boards have developed a variety of other methods for involving students, including student advisors, advisory boards, and regular reports from student organizations.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Public Education Board Member

Seeking a person of integrity, judgment and good character to devote time and energy to public service.

DUTIES:

- Represents and advocates the educational and developmental needs of children and youth, their families, and society in general.
- Works with colleagues to develop a vision for education and adopt goals, standards, policies, and rules for the public education system that are consistent with the board's mission and vision.
- Engages in continual dialogue with political authorities, community leaders, media representatives, and members of the general public on issues of importance to public education.
- Reaches consensus with other board members on selection and evaluation criteria for the position of chief education administrator, and on the recruitment and hiring of a qualified person.
- Monitors and evaluates the performance of the chief education administrator and the system as a whole, and takes corrective action as required.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- **Credibility**—has experience with service to the community; understands the needs, interests, and views of a broad cross-section of the population, not just of a particular community; embodies honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, fairness, and civility.
- **Dedication**—demonstrates commitment to the board's mission and to the principle that all children can learn to high standards; studies agenda issues thoroughly and prepares for meetings; is willing to devote large amounts of time and energy to public service.
- **Leadership**—advocates a coherent, future-oriented vision for public education; communicates well in public; functions effectively in the political arena.
- **Collegiality**—readily teams with people of varied backgrounds; seeks common ground among those holding differing views; seeks compromise and consensus after a fair and sincere discussion of rival positions.
- **Judgment**—makes decisions according to the best available research and information; weighs possible consequences of decisions; able to make urgently needed decisions even if full information is not available; considers ideas that challenge conventional wisdom.
- **Humility**—recognizes personal limits of abilities and knowledge; seeks out and listens to all views with respect; changes positions when presented with better information; follows as well as leads.
- **Fortitude**—makes hard decisions; withstands pressure from special interests and political leaders; maintains composure while under verbal attack; tolerates uncertainty, ambiguity, delays, and setbacks.
- **Awareness**—has some familiarity with current issues in public education: expertise or specialized knowledge is desirable, but not essential.
- **Loyalty**—commits to support board decisions even when on the losing side.

REMUNERATION:

The satisfactions that derive from working to improve society and expanding opportunities for children is a priceless reward.

5. COORDINATED LEADERSHIP

The board of education actively leads with one voice in directions consistent with the goals of general purpose government.

The many disappointments brought by the failed education reform efforts of recent decades have taught us a valuable lesson: top-down, command-and-control reforms simply do not work. Instead, the Study Group believes that what works best is for an education board to develop and communicate a coherent vision for education that can be translated into specific goals, ensure that each of its policy actions is consistent with the vision and goals, and then motivate people to implement them. The word that sums all this up is leadership.

No education board operates in a vacuum. Leadership in today's world requires the involvement of a much broader range of stakeholders than was the case in the past. In particular, activist governors and legislators of both parties have discovered that devoting attention to systemic educational reform can bring popularity and support. Some governors have put forward proposals to increase education's direct accountability to them in return for accepting greater personal responsibility for school performance.

By commanding media attention, high profile leaders of general government can be valuable, constructive shapers of public opinion, and they can mobilize broad support for needed changes. The Study Group appreciates that their oversight and leadership duties can also provide a necessary and valuable check on boards that are not governing well. Some big city mayors have demonstrated that centralizing authority into one office can straighten out inefficiencies, at least in the short run.

> "The first task of leadership is to sustain hope."
>
> *John Gardner*
> *Management Consultant*
>
> "Leaders combine knowledge, skills, and attitudes that manifest themselves in many ways. Leaders challenge convention. Leaders stir others into action. Leaders take risks, sometimes to their personal disadvantage. Leaders, in other words, may find themselves 'breaking ranks' with the status quo."
>
> *National Association of Secondary School Principals*
>
> "People in a crisis mode have a tendency to go ahead and do things instead of thinking them through first. But education's problems are not a crisis in the true sense. There is time to think through where we are; and where we want to go; and how best to get there."
>
> *Dr. Walter Amprey*
> *Baltimore City Public Schools*

Yet, troubling cases of grandstanding and demagoguery have sometimes distracted the public from the real issues in education. Governors understandably want to be able to demonstrate results during their term of office, but simplistic, politically expedient "reforms" can later turn out to be demoralizing or destructive. For example, demanding that the performance of schools be ranked using student scores from multiple-choice tests of basic skills can discourage the teaching of the higher-order thinking skills that employers demand. And, as noted earlier, an observed problem with centralizing control over education in the governor's office is a greater turnover rate among chief state school officers.

Citizens are looking for thoughtful, sustained leadership that will point the way towards a continually improving public education system. The Study Group believes that leadership ought to come from state education governing boards. But

others will quickly step into the open leadership vacuum if a poorly functioning board loses control of the education agenda.

Sharing Leadership

Education board members and leaders in general government all need to cultivate and constantly maintain good working relationships with each other. A governor's education initiative is more likely to succeed when the education board is a partner, not an opponent. The board can help assure that new proposals are fully developed and backed up with broad public consensus. Frequent personal contact and high-profile public conversations about the mission of education can help ensure that everyone is singing from the same song sheet. Various officials' governance roles need to be mutually agreed upon and clearly defined for wide public understanding.

Vertical coordination between state and local policymakers is also critical; state and local boards of education must be partners in policy leadership. For this to happen, information and ideas need to flow in both directions. While local school officials have the best understanding of local needs and priorities, state education officials have a responsibility to promote a broader vision of what's best for the state as a whole. For example, an appropriate state role is to assure that equitable educational opportunities are available to children and families no matter where they live in the state.

Powersharing can bring tension. Some people worry that policymaking is a "zero-sum" equation; that an increase in one policymaker's involvement must mean a decrease in someone else's authority. This does not have to be the case. The Study Group believes there are plenty of tasks to occupy everyone who wants to help improve education, as long as people are working in tandem and not at cross-purposes.

Reform Programs

Sustained, coordinated leadership is particularly important when major school improvement initiatives attempt significant change throughout the entire education system. Reform measures can take a number of years to develop, implement and evaluate, not because people are dragging their feet but because of the time needed to restructure responsibilities and learn new work habits. It would be unrealistic to expect, for example, that every teacher could successfully adopt a new set of teaching methods in a year or two, or that completely new types of assessments could be developed within one election cycle.

The Study Group urges every educational improvement program to build in process evaluation techniques with such benchmarks so that incremental progress can be clearly measured. As one member of the Study Group put it, "Policymakers need to be able to distinguish between reasons and excuses." Programs must also include opportunities for mid-course corrections in case change is found not to be the same as improvement. Meanwhile, political leaders have a duty to counsel patience to the public. Several states including Kentucky and Missouri have found that non-governmental reform commissions that receive strong support from the business community can help keep long-term school improvement initiatives on track over the long haul.

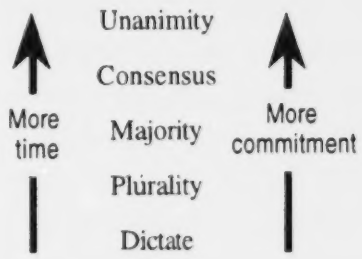
The Center on National Education Policy of Phi Delta Kappa suggests that the various reasons why public schools were originally established offer a useful framework for evaluating current education reforms. For every idea being promoted as a solution to the problems of the public schools, they urge thoughtful policymakers to ask some fundamental questions:

- ✓ Will this reform prepare all Americans to become responsible citizens?
- ✓ Will it help all people become economically self-sufficient?
- ✓ Will it promote cultural unity?
- ✓ Will it improve social conditions?
- ✓ Will it enhance individuals' happiness and enrich lives?
- ✓ Will it dispel inequities in education?

Board Cohesion

The Study Group recognized that an education board needs to speaks with one voice, particularly when attempting systemic reform, even if the influence of politics in board decision-making is inevitable. Competition between parties is generally healthy in education governance so long as stalemate is avoided and consensus is eventually reached on common ground solutions. Sometimes political influences are even desirable, because politics can push progress. People who criticize any involvement of politics in education governance might consider that there is a distinction between inclusive political parties who try to win the support of as many people as possible, whose participation should be welcomed in governance, and single-interest groups who only represent people with narrow convictions.

Board unity can be a function of time



Monica Palacio

Unfortunately, ideological attacks from all sides are making the public schools a primary battleground in America's "culture wars," polarizing some boards into hostile camps. Disturbing breakdowns in personal civility occasionally interfere with the conduct of business. Petty squabbling or factionalism hinders a board's ability to accomplish anything, quickly destroys its credibility, opens a leadership vacuum, and dissuades good citizens from serving. In short, a polarized board of education is a disservice to the public.

The Study Group feels obligated to point out that **individual board members do not have independent authority: whatever influence a member has derives from the board as a whole.** Board members who insist on promoting any kind of narrow agenda and refuse to seek compromise impair the ability of their board to carry out its responsibility to govern wisely. The bulk of board work involves finding consensus on least-bad answers to

"Compromise is not failure: it is a partial victory."
Anonymous

ambiguous questions, not matters of conscience. Once a member who has promised to advance certain positions has ensured that those perspectives are being listened to and taken into account, that member has a responsibility to thoughtfully consider the ideas of others and work to craft solutions that are in the best interests of everyone.

Yet even if consensus is never reached on contentious issues, board members have a duty not to undermine the integrity of their board's decisions. Moving disputes from the board room into the glare of publicity weakens a board's ability to fulfill its public duties. The effect is sabotage from within. Particularly when speaking with the media, a board member must be careful to distinguish between personal opinions and board positions if they diverge.

Mutual respect and good working relationships are fundamental to any board's ability to function well. Spending the time to improve board process is not "a waste of taxpayers' dollars" if it helps a board reach better decisions. Michigan state law directs the state board to convene a biennial education policy leadership institute for the governor, lieutenant governor, the state board, the state superintendent, the legislature, and the presidents of state approved teacher education institutions "to examine the most current public education policy issues and initiatives and the appropriate role of policy leaders." A neutral, objective facilitator can often help to bind disparate individuals into an effective working team.

Board Process Suggestions

This report is not a handbook of comprehensive advice on "boardsmanship skills" such as how to develop an agenda, set priorities, or forge consensus. High quality technical assistance on these matters is available from NASBE, other organizations and management consultants. *Becoming a Better Board Member* from the National School Boards Association (1996) contains useful advice for state as well as local board of education members. However, there are several points that the Study Group wishes to stress:

- A board should routinely self-evaluate its own performance and review progress towards its goals.
- Policy evaluation should be built into every policy decision.
- Every rule and policy should have a "sunset" provision so the board will periodically revisit each one. A board might also wish to also review education statutes and suggest changes to lawmakers.
- Each board should devote attention and resources to its members' own development at seminars, conferences, retreats, and strategic planning sessions that are distinct from regular business sessions. Budget decision makers need to understand the importance of ongoing skills development for board members.
- New board members need initial orientation to understand their roles and responsibilities and gain basic board process skills.
- Boards should expect clear summaries and explanations of current educational research, free of jargon, on the issues under consideration.

- Electronic mail, Internet access, and facsimile are valuable technologies for board members. Members should be issued communications equipment for the duration of their terms. Several states with "sunshine" laws that require open meetings have worked out ways to reconcile these technologies with their laws' requirements.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

The board of education engages important stakeholders and the general public in continuous dialogue about education.

Who are the ultimate "customers" public education must satisfy? Parents and families? Taxpayers? Future employers? College admissions officers? School staff members? Political leaders? Society as a whole? Students?

The correct answer is "all of the above"—and more. A multitude of people and groups have valid interests in how public education performs and is governed. All have a right to have their views taken into account, if only for the pragmatic reason that serious problems can develop when people feel frozen out of the decision-making process. Much of the frustration about public education is due to the fact that all these constituencies are legitimate; not just whom any one person believes is most important.

Communications Plan

The Study Group found that a common weakness of education reform initiatives is inadequate attention to cultivating bases of support among the general public. Effective leadership in today's society requires having a forward-thinking plan of managed communications. A continuing stream of positive messages can gradually influence opinion and build understanding and support for public education, including legislative, editorial and taxpayer support. A planned, deliberate approach should be designed to encourage the expression of shared values, repetition of consistent messages, and presentation of effective programs. The following page excerpts a January 1995 NASBE Policy Update on the elements of a good board communications plan.

Daniel Yankelovich, the noted pollster, endorses the idea that a well crafted mass communication strategy through the media can help the public understand the real complexities of an issue.* The media can help people work through the conflicting values or interests that come into play in the search for solutions, and define a common ground that can become the basis for effective action. He draws a major distinction between "raw" public opinion on a public policy issue that can be "mindless and thoughtless and irresponsible," and sophisticated "public judgment" that can eventually emerge after people wrestle with the issue. Most people go through several stages of opinion formation that media can influence in various ways. In general, Yankelovich suggests roundtable discussions with journalists as facilitators, call-in shows, and town hall meetings as effective forums for public deliberation.

Whether appointed or elected, a state board needs to give special attention to the executive branch, the legislature, and the business community. These are key audiences for tailored messages in the communications plan. The board needs to listen to these groups' concerns, understand what they want, and adjust public relations strategies as appropriate. Focusing communications on such opinion

---

* Margaret Gerteis, "Violence, Public Health, and the Media," Annenberg Washington Program, 1993.

DEVELOPING STATE BOARD COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

A classic principle of public relations is to align the goals of the organization with the public interest, and then develop a plan that promotes the shared objectives. The public will support particular education goals when it becomes apparent that its interests are served by doing so.

Compared with local education boards, state boards are somewhat removed from direct public contact. Their role is akin to a corporate headquarters that develops an umbrella marketing campaign by surveying consumers, positioning the products, and promoting retail sales. The quest for quality education for all children, however, is a noble enterprise, not a consumer product. Advocacy of a quality education for every child is an effective overarching theme for all communications.

Strategic public relations objectives must be translated into actionable ideas that reach people directly. A public relations program to energize public support should implemented throughout the year, incorporating the following characteristics.

Communications Plan Elements

- Use current public opinion survey research to determine public priorities. Learn also the concerns of other key constituencies on whom the success of your policies depend.
- Identify common ground with the people who matter. Develop specific goals that reflect the public interest. Focus on only a few key goals, such as promoting school improvement.
- Create themes, messages, and examples that support the goals. Develop, and then follow a schedule of communications activities.
- Employ a variety of communications techniques, such as giving interviews and editorial board briefings, public hearings and press conferences, testimony and guest commentary. Use the board's high profile to promote its agenda. Showcase programs. Share successes. Repeat themes. Be consistent. Allow flexibility to take advantage of opportunities and respond to criticism.
- Designate a chief media spokesperson to assure consistent messages. Spokespersons for a board of education should be credible and as open and visible as possible. Several board members can share this role after they agree on message and talking points.
- Include local school boards/districts as partners in the communications process. The community level is often the point where the public's reaction tests a policy, and where swift response to media coverage can be pivotal. Offer concepts, themes, and platforms that can be adapted and used by local school boards/districts. Suggest ways to apply key messages in local situations.
- Continuously measure results, including the quantity and quality of media placements; favorability of the coverage, and changes in public attitudes. Support for goals/policies can be measured by elections and referenda, opinion polls, public comment, or degree of opposition.
- Include checkpoints to adjust communications tactics or messages based on evaluation results. Adjust the plan as needed. Look ahead.
- Manage any controversy according to a predetermined contingency plan.
- Make sure all major board actions and decisions are in accord with the vision being communicated.
- Use the state education agency's Public Information Officer or NASBE as a resource for communications counsel and/or technical assistance.

leaders helps build "buy in" for board programs from larger constituencies. A broad foundation of support from the business community and other sectors of society is the best insurance against disruptive conflict that can distract a school from its educational mission.

Two-Way Dialogue

A good communications strategy is more than just a one-way flow of information from policymakers to the public. It also engages and is responsive to key stakeholder groups. Dialogue is essential to effective policy development and implementation. A good example of strategic thinking was recently provided by the Missouri Partnership for Outstanding Schools, a public/private organization whose mission is to assist local districts in implementation of education reform. They commissioned Public Agenda to conduct public opinion research in the state to help guide its activities.* Among the many findings is that Missourians are more critical of their public schools than people elsewhere in the nation, and yet Missourians are also more inclined to support change within the public school context, but are opposed to certain alternatives including vouchers. This kind of information is invaluable to policymaking boards.

People from all walks of life must have opportunities to express their concerns, and feel they are being sincerely heeded. Public hearings can be a valuable means of gaining both input and trust. Even though hearings might slow down the policy development process, experience teaches that the time devoted to public meetings is a wise investment that can result in increased levels of support. However, hearings can exacerbate problems if not well organized with respect and fairness in mind. Some tips for conducting public hearings can be found on the next page.

> "One large component of [education] reform that has been given scant attention is keeping the public informed, educated, and engaged in both the reform and the reasons for it. If school reform is going to be successful, the entire community—not just researchers and project implementors—must believe in the reasons behind the reform and the specifics of it."
>
> *Public Education Fund Network*

---

* Public Agenda, *Committed to Change: Missouri Citizens and Public Education*, 1996.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC HEARINGS

Following are some logistical considerations that hearing planners should take into consideration:

- Hold the hearing at a time and place that is convenient to the audience, not to administrators or the board.
- Provide child care.
- The hearing room's layout affects the dynamics. A raised dais can be intimidating. The board's distance from the audience is symbolic.
- If a hearing must be postponed, ensure that someone is there to greet the people who did not get the news.
- Microphones are always essential, regardless of the size of the room, so that the meeting can be recorded and because no one knows who might be hard of hearing.
- Some communities might expect refreshments.

Ground rules for speakers help to maintain decorum, defuse controversy, and preserve order when emotions run high—provided they are published *before* the hearing or resentment and hostility can result. Some suggestions:

- Designate a fixed period of time for the entire discussion.
- Require that people who want to speak sign in first.
- Enforce strict time limits for all presentations.
- Randomize the order of speakers to prevent pre-scripted relay presentations by organized groups who wish to dominate the microphone.
- Invite speakers to submit written testimony that expands on their remarks.

Board members should be able to respond to what speakers have to say because total non-response can frustrate and anger the audience. However, avoid making any immediate off-the-cuff judgments. The purpose of a hearing is to gather input and dialogue, not to debate and decide matters in public.

Personal insults do not belong in public discourse and do not have to be tolerated.

NASBE

7. DEVOLVED AUTHORITY

An organizing principle of granting as much autonomy as possible to the lowest possible level, as long as essential governance responsibilities are maintained through reliable methods of accountability.

The overriding theme of governance change in both the corporate world and government since the 1970's is to flatten bureaucratic structures. In public education this has taken the form of setting goals and standards at the state level, granting educators at the district and school levels more decision-making authority within their areas of responsibility, and holding them accountable with improved assessments. The Study Group concurs that this is the direction public education needs to go.

Many states are revising their rules and regulations so that the state's guidance prescribes results without specifying how to accomplish them. Accordingly, state education agencies are being restructured to act less as compliance monitors and more as enabling providers of technical assistance. Progress has been slower than many critics would like, but states are steadily moving forward to restructure education along these lines.

During two visits to Chicago the Study Group studied in some depth that city's experiences with its Local School Councils since 1988 and mayoral control of the Central Office since 1995. Chicago provides a valuable demonstration of the promises and pitfalls of site-based management and provides lessons about the appropriate state role in promoting and supporting bold local reform. The Study Group came away firmly supporting the general principle of granting as much authority as possible to a level as close as possible to the classroom, with accountability for results. Both democratic principle and pragmatic reasons justify welcoming the participation of family and school staff members in making decisions that affect their school.

Yet, policymakers need to appreciate that devolving authority so that it leads to real school improvement requires more than just a stroke of the pen. One thing Chicago teaches is that genuine authority correlates with control over resources. In addition, newly empowered local people need training and on-going technical assistance if they are to successfully oversee quality education for their children. Schools are ripe for frustration and failure if encouraged to be innovative but receive neither back-up support nor a budget to use as they see fit

Family Choice

Perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of transferring more authority to the school level is the potential for families to develop closer relationships with their children's schools. Research is conclusive that a high degree of parental involvement correlates with high student achievement. Magnet schools, open enrollment among public schools, free

> Any strategy for improvement or any recommendation to change the governance structure must support the unit of government that best can promote equity, efficiency, and effectiveness and also is nearest the student. This must be so, even though support for the unit nearest the students by no means precludes—and, indeed, often requires—support and actions far away from the classroom.
>
> *Task Force on School Governance*
> *National Schools Boards Association*

transfer among school districts, and other alternatives to geographically-assigned schools are intended to engage parents by putting authority over education directly into their hands by providing them choice among a variety of educational options. Although implemented locally, the state has an important leadership and support role for making such reforms work.

> "Having selected their school, parents and teachers have a larger stake in the achievement of their students and in the success of the school. No longer limited by real estate or property lines, students will attend the school that best fits their needs. This compatibility will likely increase satisfaction as well as performance. School selection will also increase parental involvement... a key factor in student achievement."
>
> *Florida Department of Education*

Proponents of choice-based programs argue that these approaches are likely to lead to improvements throughout entire education systems because: a) competition for parents' favor will cause every school to aim for excellence or face the threat of closure due to lack of students; and b) freed of central control, alternative settings would demonstrate innovative practices for other schools, i.e., "lighthouse effect." Although the jury is still out on whether these governance changes truly bring improvements in student achievement, the Study Group believes that strengthening ties among people in the school community can only have positive effects.

Responsibility, Accountability

Regardless of outside pressures or internal board member support for complete parent empowerment or radical decentralization of the education system, state boards must not abrogate their constitutionally mandated responsibilities over education. To illustrate what cannot be relinquished, granting a public school full authority to select its student body on the basis of entrance test scores can conflict with larger state goals of guaranteeing educational opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities, homeless students, or students whose parents are not interested in becoming involved in school affairs. Clearly then, decentralization can never be total because certain state interests will always apply.

In order to free districts and schools from state education procedures and regulations as much as possible, alternative means to traditional "input-oriented" methods for promoting educational quality—methods that are not producing enough schools that satisfy today's higher expectations—must be in place that assure accountability of both taxpayer dollars and educational results. This is the secret Achilles' Heel of decentralization, because no state yet has an adequate system that comprehensively addresses all three legs of the "accountability triad" described by the Hudson Institute: 1) clear expectations for what students need to know and be able to do; 2) a fair and reliable system of tracking students' and school system performance; and 3) stinging consequences for schools that fall short of the mark.

The Study Group emphasizes the need in a "performance-based" education system for an early warning system that will alert state education officials if schools or districts are faltering. Such a system should include a graduated series of early intervention measures that will come into place as needed so that full state takeovers of schools or districts is invoked only as a last resort, a sanction that no one wants. Kentucky is among the few states that have developed a comprehensive system of rewards and consequences.

Many educators worry that schools will be sanctioned for poor performance even if adequate resources necessary for high quality education are not provided for their use. The Study Group agrees that for the sake of fairness, both to students and schools, states must not overlook the need for *system* performance standards to go along with student performance standards. States must commit themselves to ensuring that every school has the capacity to teach to the high standards expected of them.

Lessons from Charter Schools

Charter schools are a logical extension of the modern management principle of combining greater autonomy with greater accountability. As experience with charter and other alternative schools gradually accumulates, it is increasingly clear that critics' worst fears can be assuaged with proper safeguards. At the same time, neither are proponents' most extravagant claims being achieved.

According the Education Commission of the States (ECS), in the past five years 25 states have passed laws permitting charter schools, and by May 1996 there were more than 270 operating. Although reliable evidence concerning student academic performance is not yet available, policymakers can draw some initial lessons, some of which are pertinent to *all* schools:

REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES IN KENTUCKY

The 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act required the State Board of Education to establish an accountability system to reward schools that improve, and define consequences for those that do not.

Financial rewards are distributed in the following way:

- The State Board establishes a "threshold" level of improvement for each school.
- Improvement is measured over a two-year period in such areas as student achievement, attendance and dropout rates, grade retention, and the percentage of students going on to college, military service or the workplace.
- Rewards go to schools that meet their improvement goals. In April 1995, Kentucky [distributed] more than $26 million in rewards to schools that made the largest gains in performance.

Schools that decline or fail to improve face progressive remedies and sanctions:

- A school that fails to reach its threshold goals must prepare an improvement plan.
- A school that falls in this category after the next assessment is assigned one or more Kentucky Distinguished Educators, who have the authority to make extensive changes in school operation.
- Failure to improve after the third assessment can result in the school's being declared "in crisis." Certified staff are placed on probation, and students' parents are notified of their right to transfer their child to a "successful" school. The Distinguished Educator assigned to the school makes recommendations to the superintendent as to the retention, dismissal or transfer of school staff. This process continues every six months until the State Board determines the school is no longer in crisis.
- If an entire district is declared "in crisis," the superintendent and local school board are subject to dismissal, and the district is placed under the management of one or more Kentucky Distinguished Educators assigned by the State Board of Education.

In addition to Kentucky, 20 other states have initiated some form of academic bankruptcy provisions. Although all of them face various challenges, the idea is spreading across the country.

Education Commission of the States, 1995

"It is no longer satisfactory to provide the opportunity for the individual to learn; we must also require the 'system' to share responsibility if a student does not learn."

Task Force on School Governance
National Schools Boards Association

- No state has yet developed a sound system of results-based evaluation and accountability. According to a recent report from the Hudson Institute, Massachusetts appears closest to one that is both flexible and meaningful for both charter and all other schools.
- New ways to administer necessary state regulations concerning health, safety, civil rights, building standards, and fiscal accountability in less burdensome ways are urgently needed.
- Charter schools typically experience many of the problems associated with starting small businesses. These include staffing and management challenges; lack of enough start-up funding, capital resources, and cash flow; and discovering the need to adapt to a different customer base than expected.
- All charter schools are not necessarily innovative. If states hope for lighthouse effects from a variety of experimental approaches, incentives to innovate need to be included in the chartering process.
- Charter schools do appear to be a way of expanding the variety of educational alternatives. According to ECS, approximately half primarily are serving "at-risk" students.
- Innovation and competition with regular schools is greatest in states where charters can be granted by other than local school boards, and where non-educators are permitted to apply.
- A common challenge is to institutionalize the legacies of dynamic individuals who have moved on.
- Some charter schools are suffering the same kinds of constituent pressures and governance difficulties faced by the public schools, with the ironic result that some are recreating little bureaucracies.
- Education for students with disabilities can be provided without the regulatory superstructure and enforcement mechanisms common in many public schools.
- The intentions of state policymakers are easily sabotaged at the level of implementation. As the Hudson Institute report colorfully puts it, "Bureaucrats disposed to strangle innovations with red tape are particularly good at discovering and exploiting stealth regulations."

"The Massachusetts Secretary of Education posed three central questions to guide [a charter] school's evaluation: Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? And is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?

"To judge performance against those three general criteria, Massachusetts asked each school to:

- Develop and pursue its own clear and measurable school performance objectives;
- Measure and document progress towards those objectives;
- Use credible student assessment tools for annually tracking student performance; and
- Annually report its objectives, progress toward them, and students assessment results, along with other required information requested by the state.

"It should be noted that when Massachusetts' new statewide assessments for public education are in place, charter school pupils will be expected to take these as well."

Hudson Institute, 1996

In sum, charter schools appear to be losing their reputation as radical "break the mold" schools. At the same time, public school systems are gradually learning to live alongside charter schools and to incorporate lessons from their experience.

Addressing the Study Group, Superintendent Edward Kelly described all 54 public schools in Prince William County, Virginia, as *de facto* charter schools. Each school writes its own operation plan and directly hires its teachers. The district allocates personnel funds based on average teacher salaries, but it is up to each school whether to spend it on other things. Dr. Kelly challenged the Study Group to free *all* schools from rules that impede success, not just schools outside the regular system.

> "Though we have witnessed much foot-dragging and hostility from local school boards and superintendents, not all are antagonistic toward charter schools. Some are even beginning to explore how their school systems might make good use of the charter law for their own innovations...
>
> "Policymakers would do well to accept the fact that successful charter schools will eventually have a negative financial impact on existing school districts, and they should prepare to deal with this politically."
>
> *Hudson Institute, 1996*

Points to Consider

The Study Group encourages every state, district, and school to be flexible and innovate within and beyond the existing education system. But the Study Group also emphasizes the need for all schools to be held to the same high standards. Following are some additional recommendations:

- Policymakers must never lose sight of their constitutional charge to serve all children. When considering choice-based programs, questions of equity need to be thoroughly explored and answered.
- Schools need to emphasize our commonalities as Americans, not exacerbate our differences. Students must share common experiences in addition to those provided by pop culture if a cohesive society is to be maintained.
- Public funds must never be turned over to schools or other entities without public oversight for how they are spent.
- State charter school laws and policies should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of chartering entities, school operators, parents, and existing public school authorities to avoid confusion and assure accountability.
- Every chartering entity must itself be accountable to the state and the public.
- For any kind of choice system to work, all families need access to good information in a useful format about their available choices.
- If family members are to be effectively involved in governance at the school level, states or districts should consider the need for orientation and/or training programs. Ideally, program content would be determined by families themselves to satisfy their own recognized needs for information and skills building. Yet policymakers must also accept that not all parents can or will choose to become involved.

8. COLLABORATION

The board of education shares responsibility for fostering children's overall development.

In a perfect world, every family would fulfill its responsibilities to satisfy their children's physical, emotional, social and moral growth needs, so that schools could focus all their time and energy on developing students' academic and citizenship knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, for a number of complex reasons, many families are having trouble fulfilling their responsibilities. An ever-increasing number of children and youth are coming to school with very serious health, mental health, social, and substance abuse problems. These problems are becoming as common in comfortable suburbs as they are in stressed urban areas and isolated rural settings.

The historical tradition of separating education from general purpose government calls for the public schools to provide quality education for all, while other public agencies provide medical, social and various other human services. In its 1995 report, *First Things First,* the business-oriented Council for Education Development expressed the serious concerns of many people that in recent years schools have taken on too many human services goals that are distracting schools from their educational mission. Although the CED report recognizes the realities of stressed families, it calls on other government agencies to take primary responsibility for children's health and social needs.

But are these agencies doing so? Can educators pass the buck if no one is there to take it?

All families should be expected to provide their children with the support they need to grow into healthy and disciplined individuals. Schools can never take the place of parents, of course, and would never want to, but schools *do* have a positive role to play in reinforcing families' guidance and ameliorating anti-social behavior if a child's parents have not done their duty.

In the not-too-distant past, society could easily tolerate many children and youth leaving school early because of personal problems or family disruption. Most adults without a good education could nevertheless find adequately paying jobs. That is no longer the case. In today's world, everyone needs to be as well-educated and self-reliant as possible.

Reluctantly, the Study Group had to conclude that schools cannot simply ignore obstacles that hinder a student's ability to learn, hoping that someone else will take care of their non-

"Community problems need to be addressed through community-driven services and institutions. These services may be *placed* in the schools, they may be *delivered* through schools, but they should not be made the *responsibility* of schools."

Committee for Economic Development

...but...

"Schools are where the kids are and they bring their problems with them."

Michael Usdan
Institute for Educational Leadership

"The prevention of social problems is not a matter of all or nothing. It will make a difference if we can reduce the incidence of low birth-weight, if an isolated mother is helped to respond to her difficult infant, and if more children come to school better prepared, succeed in mastering fundamental academic skills and have reason to look forward to a better future. It will be of value if we can reduce one risk factor or two, even if others remain."

Lisbeth Shorr, Researcher

academic problems. The public education system needs to accept a ***share*** of the responsibility for children's non-academic needs, although the public schools must also avoid becoming primary human service providers. Shared responsibility does not mean public schools should divert scarce funds from teaching and learning. Rather, it means that if family obligations go unmet, the education system should collaborate with other agencies and organizations to arrange for the needed services, using accountable linkage mechanisms to identify the cost-effective solutions to children's problems.

> "Collaboration is an unnatural act between nonconsenting adults."
> *Margaret Dunkel*
> *Institute for Educational Leadership*

Boards of education have a duty to take the broad view and provide leadership on issues concerning children's well-being. If general government services are demonstrably falling short, state board of education members are particularly well-placed to demonstrate the active leadership that is sometimes required to stimulate needed services. In addition, public education leaders ought to be out front advocating for the necessary funds for non-academic services, even if schools do not provide them.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Numerous factors impede cross-agency coordination and collaboration. Among them are time, lack of professionals' familiarity with each others' fields, reluctance to share limited resources, and nervousness that some parents will believe their role is being usurped. Stable financing is perhaps the largest practical barrier.

Collaboration can be difficult and time-consuming. If it is to routinely occur, state and school districts need to establish a framework of incentives to collaborate. Incentives might include blending funds, requiring joint funding applications, merging or formally linking governance bodies, or revising licensing requirements to oblige educators and other professionals to be familiar with each others' fields. School district boundaries in West Virginia and Utah generally match county lines, facilitating efficient cross-agency activities. Accounting systems that disaggregate expenditures so that policymakers have a more accurate picture of the actual costs of instruction versus other distinct operations are helpful for assessing cost-effectiveness.

In recent years states have been experimenting with creative methods of collaborative governance. For example:

- The Healthy Child, Healthy California initiative provides funding support to locally initiated multi-agency councils.
- Maryland's Subcabinet for Children,Youth and Families consists of the Secretaries of various state child-serving agencies and focuses on ensuring system-wide decision-making oversight, monitoring, and accountability for family-focused services.

Taxonomy of Cooperation

Collaborative...characterized by shared responsibility and authority

Compatible.....separate and autonomous, not in conflict

Coordinated ....separate and autonomous, equal in significance or organized on parallel tracks

Complementary..mutually supportive

Coherent .....consistent among themselves and rational in relation to the state's education plan and goals

- ❖ Oregon's Commission on Children and Families has core benchmarks related to children and families that it uses to help communities develop comprehensive community-based plans.

- ❖ Washington's Family Policy Council includes the heads of five agencies (Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, and the Employment Security Department), four legislators, and a Governor's Office administrator.

- ❖ Other state commissions include Arkansas' Governor's Partnership Council for Children and Families, Kentucky's Commission on Human Services Collaboration, and Texas's Commission on Children and Youth.*

Local examples of good programs can be found in every state. Many schools are turning into community centers with a range of coordinated family services such as day care, primary health care, before- and after-school programs, or satellite offices for social services. Neighborhood "full-service schools" can become true centers of community life that encourage taxpayers without children to feel invested in public education. Composite "community report cards" that pull together available statistics, such as on educational performance, health data, housing conditions, socioeconomic profiles, and juvenile crime rates present rich portraits of the condition of local children and families.

Clearly, no single model is appropriate for every school, community or state. Solutions must be tailored to local needs and circumstances. Input from students' families and other community members is essential to the planning and oversight of school–based or school–linked services.

A spectrum of models for organizing preventive health and social services at schools exist, ranging from:

- specialized staff who serve as in–school 'consultants' for teachers;
- organized service referral programs;
- case managers who arrange for an appropriate variety of tailored services;
- agencies 'co–locating' staff at schools; and
- full service health units located on school campuses.

NASBE Health Schools Network

* Ensuring Student Success Through Collaboration Project, "Changing Decision Making to Improve Results for Children and Families: How Ten States Are Tackling Tough Governance Issues," Council of Chief State School Officers 1996.

V. GOVERNANCE AT A CROSSROADS

The Study Group concluded that state governments are running out of quick or "easy" education reforms, like developing new teacher tests or revising curriculum frameworks. What can be tinkered with has been: the cheap solutions have mostly been tried. What's left are the complex, long-term, intractable, and expensive school improvement measures like extensive staff professional development programs, multi-faceted assessment strategies, and massive investments in advanced learning technologies.

Building support for such measures, guiding their development and overseeing their implementation requires nothing less than sound, stable, high-performance governance. The nation is at a crossroads in the sense that we have a choice between staying with public schools that are improving incrementally, if at all, or taking a serious look at all aspects of education governance and making the often uncomfortable decisions that might be required to break entrenched traditions or step on powerful toes.

As repeatedly mentioned earlier, there are no simple measures that will dramatically speed the process of educational improvement. Policymakers need to be prepared for a long, strenuous and bumpy ride into the next century.

The Study Group believes that a system of education governance that shares the characteristics described in this report can help to ensure that:

- neither the *status quo* nor narrow political factions reign;
- all points of view are honestly brought forward, investigated, evaluated, and calmly debated;
- relevant research findings and innovative ideas are considered;
- the merits and potential consequences of proposed policies are carefully thought through;
- decisions are reached through a fair process that balances competing interests;
- judgments reflect what is best for the common good; and
- policies are monitored for effectiveness and revisited as necessary.

"States are learning that putting reforms down on paper, albeit difficult, is easy compared to putting reforms into practice. If anything, the past ten years of reform point to the incredible tenacity of the status quo."

Public Education Fund Network

"Americans want school reform, but are they really willing to go through with the kinds of changes that will be necessary?"

Kristen J. Amundson, Fairfax Virginia School Board Chair

The Study Group's conclusions are generally consistent with the findings of a study conducted by the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and

Universities. Researchers identified six sets of characteristics and behaviors that distinguish strong college boards of trustees from weak boards (listed on the next page). They also discovered a direct relationship between the boards at 22 independent liberal arts colleges that fulfill these characteristics and the good performance of their institutions as measured by financial indicators. The findings apply just as well to state boards of education.

In today's climate of re-examining every assumption of public education, innovations in governance are beginning to emerge as states experiment with different ways of structuring lines of governance authority. The Study Group encourages widespread innovation in governance that are more than quick fixes or short-sighted tinkering. New models must be well documented and evaluated so that their lessons can be widely shared.

Putting aside distracting issues and the battle of ideas that rages about us, policymakers must try to step back, look at the whole picture, and work to establish steady, non-partisan, representative leadership that earnestly tackles difficult education challenges. High-performance schools require high-performance leadership. Americans are demanding, and deserve, nothing less.

The Six Competencies of Effective Boards

1. THE CONTEXTUAL DIMENSION

   The board understands and takes into account the culture and norms of the organization it governs. The board:

   - Adapts to distinctive characteristics and culture of the institution's environment.
   - Relies on the institution's mission, values, and tradition as guides for decisions.
   - Acts so as to exemplify and reinforce the organization's core values.

2. THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION

   The board takes the necessary steps to ensure that trustees are well-informed about the institution, the profession, and the board's roles, responsibilities, and performance. The board:

   - Consciously creates opportunities for trustee education and development [on matters of substance and process].
   - Regularly seeks information and feedback on its performance.
   - Pauses periodically for self-reflection to diagnose its strengths and limitations, and to examine its mistakes.

3. THE INTERPERSONAL DIMENSION

   The board nurtures the development of trustees *as a group*, attends to the board's collective welfare, and fosters a sense of cohesiveness. The board:

   - Creates a sense of inclusiveness among trustees.
   - Develops group goals and recognizes group achievements.
   - Identifies and cultivates leadership within the board.

4. THE ANALYTICAL DIMENSION

   The board recognizes complexities and subtleties in the issues it faces, and draws upon multiple perspectives to dissect complex problems and to synthesize appropriate responses. The board:

   - Approaches problems from a broad institutional outlook.
   - Searches widely for concrete information and actively seeks different viewpoints from multiple constituencies.
   - Tolerates ambiguity and recognizes that complex matters rarely yield to perfect solutions.

5. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

   The board accepts as one of its primary responsibilities the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships among key constituencies. The board:

   - Respects the integrity of the governing process and the legitimate roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders.
   - Consults often and communicates directly with key constituencies.
   - Attempts to minimize conflict and win/lose situations.

6. THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION

   The board helps envision and shape institutional direction and helps ensure a strategic approach to the organization's future. The board:

   - Cultivates and concentrates on processes that shape institutional priorities.
   - Directs its attention to priorities or decisions of strategic or symbolic magnitude to the institution.
   - Anticipates potential problems and acts before issues become urgent.

Richard Chait, Thomas Holland, and Barbara Taylor, "What Makes a Board of Trustees Effective?," undated. The study was funded by the Lilly Endowment and the U.S. Department of Education and made available by the late George L. Crowell, Ph.D.

STUDY GROUP MEMBERS AND PRESENTERS

1995 NASBE President Maud Dahme of New Jersey appointed the Study Group on Education Governance in response to members' expressed concerns about the role of state boards of education in today's reform environment. She thought it time to ask a deliberative group of association member volunteers to study major problems, explore current issues, and make recommendations to other NASBE members on what constitutes good education governance as the nation heads into the next century. 1996 NASBE President Patricia Hayes of Colorado endorsed the charge and continued the Study Group a second year.

The Study Group consisted of interested NASBE members drawn from 18 states who represent a wide variety of experiences, political backgrounds, and perspectives. In a series of seven meetings over two years, the Study Group heard from a variety of theorists and practitioners about their perceptions of key problems and possible solutions. This report reflects consensus reached after extensive discussion and several rounds of debate.

Members

Dorothy Beardmore
Michigan State Board of Education

Elmer Bietz *
South Dakota State Board of Education

Robert J. Brown, *Chair*
Minnesota State Board of Education

Keith T. Checketts
Utah State Board of Education

Donna Contois
Louisiana State Board of Education

William Byron Darden
Arizona State Board of Education

Anne Dillman
New Jersey State Board of Education

Kevin P. Gilmore #
Kansas State Board of Education

Beverly P. Greenberg *
Connecticut State Board of Education

Gretchen L. McDowell *
Illinois State Board of Education

Michael W. Mitchel #
Oklahoma State Board of Education

Hazel F. Petrocco
Colorado State Board of Education

Betty Preston
Missouri State Board of Education

Judith Stiegler
Oregon State Board of Education

Sally Sugarman
Vermont State Board of Education

Gerti B. Thomas #
California State Board of Education

Virginia M. Trujillo, *Vice-Chair*
New Mexico State Board of Education

Representing the National Council of State Board of Education Executives:
Robert Rice
Assistant Superintendent for Research and Planning
Maryland Department of Education

Representing the National Council of State Education Attorneys:
Roslynne Novack #
Counsel to the New Jersey State Board of Education

NASBE Staff
Jim Bogden, Report Author
Jane Ascroft
Ben Louie

* Member in 1995 only. # Joined in 1996.

Presenters

January 1995, Washington D.C.

Setting the Stage: A National Overview of Education Governance

Michael Usdan
Institute for Educational Leadership

The New Federalism

Dennis Doyle
Hudson Institute

Paul Weckstein
Center for Law and Education

Edward Kelly
Prince William County School District

Perspectives of Other Stakeholders

Aaron Bell
National Conference of State Legislatures

Paul Goren
National Governor's Association

April 1995, Washington D.C.

Local Governance in the 90's

Robert (Bud) Spillane
Fairfax County Public Schools

Modernizing Education Governance

Walter Amprey
Baltimore City Schools

John Anderson
New American Schools Development Corporation

Frank Barham
Virginia School Boards Association

Competing Players in Governance

John Meyers
Augenblick, Van de Water & Myers

Trends in the Delivery of Education

Joe Sherer
Computer Curriculum Corporation

June 1995, Chicago, Illinois

Governance Reforms in Chicago: An Overview

G. Alfred (Fred) Hess, Jr.
Chicago Panel on School Policy

Issues in Chicago Governance Reform

Patricia Harvey
Chicago Board of Education

Harriet O'Donnell
Local School Council, Amundsen High School

Eric Outten
Schools First

Why Governance Issues Are So Difficult

Robert Rice
Maryland State Department of Education

Lessons About Board Effectiveness

Brenda Welburn
NASBE

January 1996, Washington D.C.

Competitive Market Strategies: What's the Theory, How's It Working?

Ted Kolderie
Center for Policy Studies

Equity and Competition

Andrea DiLorenzo
Center for the Preservation of Public Education, National Education Association

Competition: The Local School Board Perspective

Jeremiah Floyd
National School Boards Association

Can Competition Really Work in Education?

Jeanne Allen
Center for Education Reform

NOTE: The positions indicated were those at time of the presentation

STATE EDUCATION GOVERNANCE SUMMARIZED

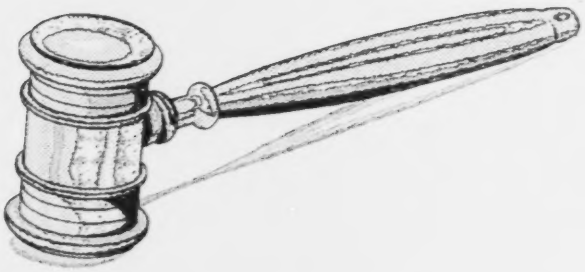
(Revised September 1996)

State	*Method of Selection of State Board of Education (SBE)*	*Number Voting SBE Members*	*Length of Board Member Term*	*Method of Selection of Chief State School Officer*	*Official Role of Chief on SBE*	*Unique Feature of State Board*	*Special Notes*
Alabama	Partisan ballot	8 elected & Gov.	4	Appt. by SBE	Sec. & Exec. Off.	Gov. sits as President of Board	
Alaska	Appt. by Gov.	7	5	Appt. by SBE with approval by Gov.	Exec. Officer	Board appoints one non-voting student member and one non-voting military member	Chief must have 5 yrs. experience in education with 3 in administration
Arizona	Appt. by Gov., confirmed by Senate	9	4	Partisan ballot	Exec. Officer.	Sits as Vo-Tech Board with 2 additional business members Three lay members required	
Arkansas	Appt. by Gov.	12	6	Appt. by SBE	Agent & non-voting ex-officio member		Chief must have 10 yrs. experience as a teacher with 5 in administration Chief serves at the pleasure of the Gov.
California	Appt. by Gov.	11, incl. 1 student	4 (student is 1 year)	Non-partisan ballot	Sec. & Exec. Off.	Student member has full voting and participation rights	
Colorado	Partisan ballot	7	6	Appt. by SBE	Secretary		
Connecticut	Appt. by Gov.	9	4	Appt. by SBE	Secretary	The Commissioner of Higher Education is a non-voting ex-officio member	
Delaware	Appt. by Gov. and approved by the Senate. President serves at the pleasure of the Gov.	7	6	Appt. by SBE	Exec. Secretary	4 SBE members must have local board experience Must be a resident for 5 yrs. in order to sit on board	CSSO must have 5 yrs. experience in teaching and admin.
Florida	Partisan ballot	7	4	Elected statewide	Sec. & Exec. Off.	SBE consists of elected cabinet members (Gov., CSSO, Sec. of State, Treas, Comptroller, Attorney General, Com. of Ag.)	Board has jurisdiction over the Board of Regents of the State Univ. system and State Board of Community Colleges
Georgia	Appt. by Gov.	11	7	Elected statewide	Executive Secretary	Must be a resident for 5 yrs. to sit on board	Chief must be a teacher for 3 yrs.
Hawaii	Non-partisan ballot	13	4	Appt. by SBE	Executive Officer & Secretary	Non-voting student member, selected by the State Student Council	
Idaho	Appt. by Gov.	7	5	Non-partisan ballot	Executive Secretary	Must be a resident for 3 yrs. in order to sit on board Serves with Regents of the Univ. of Idaho	
Illinois	Appt. by Gov.	9	6	Appt. by SBE	Chief Executive Officer	Requirements for regional and political balance on board	

State	Method of Selection of State Board of Education (SBE)	Number Voting SBE Members	Length of Board Member Term	Method of Selection of Chief State School Officer	Official Role of Chief on SBE	Unique Feature of State Board	Special Notes
Indiana	10 appt. by Gov. and elected Chief	11	4	Partisan ballot	Chairman and voting member	4 members must be educators Political balance is required $2,000 per yr.	
Iowa	Appt. by Gov.	9	6	Appt. by Gov.	Executive Officer		
Kansas	Partisan ballot	10	4	Appt. by SBE	Executive Officer		
Kentucky	Appt. by Gov.	11	4	Appt. by SBE	Exec. Sec. and Exec. Admin.	Executive Director of Council on Higher Education is non-voting ex-officio member To sit on the board must be a resident for 3 yrs., at least 30 years old, and hold a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university	Gov. appoints Sec. of Ed. Arts & Humanities
Louisiana	8 elected and 3 appt. by Gov.	11	4	Appt. by SBE	Ex-officio Sec.		
Maine	Appt. by Gov.	9	5	Appt. by Gov.	None		
Maryland	Appt. by Gov.	12 incl. student member	4 (student term one year)	Appt. by SBE	Chief Exec. & Sec.-Treas.	Voting high school student	Chief must have 7 yrs. teaching experience and administration exp.
Massachusetts	Appt. by Gov.	9 incl. student member	5	Appt. by SBE	Board Sec. & Chief Executive Officer	Chancellor of Higher Ed. Board is ex officio voting member Voting student elected by the State Student Advisory Council.	Board reduced from 15 to 7 members in August, 1996. Current terms vary in length to provide transition period.
Michigan	Partisan ballot	8	8	Appt. by SBE	Chairman	Constitutional Board with defined responsibility for K-12 education and more limited role in post-secondary.	
Minnesota	Appt. by Gov. and confirmed by Senate	9	4	Appt. by Gov.	Ex-officio, non-voting Secretary	8 members are selected by Congressional district plus 1 at large 3 SBE members must have been local board members Non-voting student member	Dept. of Ed. has been replaced by a Dept. of Children, Families, and Learning; its Secretary serves as Chief (need not be educator).
Mississippi	5 appt. by Gov. and 4 appt. by Leg.	9	9	Appt. by SBE	Executive Secretary	Lt. Gov. and Speaker of the House each appoint 2 members	Chief must have 5 yrs. admin. experience
Missouri	Appt. by Gov. with consent of Senate	8	8	Appt. by SBE	Chief Admin. Off.	Authority over Univ. and Comm. College system and authority over teacher education programs.	
Montana	Appt. by Gov.	7	7	Partisan ballot	Non-voting ex-officio member	Gov. is ex-officio member Non-voting student member	
Nebraska	Non-partisan ballot	8	4	Appt. by SBE	Executive Officer	Teachers, state officials or candidates, and non-residents are not-eligible for board	

State	Method of Selection of State Board of Education (SBE)	Number Voting SBE Members	Length of Board Member Term	Method of Selection of Chief State School Officer	Official Role of Chief on SBE	Unique Feature of State Board	Special Notes
Nevada	Non-partisan ballot	11	4	Appt. by SBE	Secretary	Non-voting student member	
New Hampshire	Appt. by Gov. and Council	7	5	Appt. by SBE	None		
New Jersey	Appt. by Gov.	13	6	Appt. by Gov.	Secretary	3 members of SBE must be women Must be a resident for 5 yrs. to sit on board	
New Mexico	10 elected and 5 appt. by Gov.	15	4	Appt. by SBE	Chief Admin. Off.		
New York	Appt. by Legislature	16	5	Appt. by SBE	Chief Executive Off.	Responsible for higher education, cultural institutions, and licensed professions.	
North Carolina	Appt. by Gov.	11	8	Partisan ballot	Secretary & Chief Admin. Off.	2 Teacher of the Year advisors; 2 student advisors	Separate higher ed. board Separate community colleges board
North Dakota	Appt. by Gov.	7	6	Non-partisan ballot	Exec. Dir. & Sec.		
Ohio	11 elected by non-partisan ballot and 8 appt. by Gov.	19	4	Appt. by SBE	Sec. & Admin. Off.	2 ex-officio members	Separate board for higher ed.
Oklahoma	Appt. by Gov.	7 on state board incl. Chief; 13 on Vo-Tech board incl. Chief	6	Partisan ballot	Voting Chairperson of both boards	The State Board of Vocational and Technical Education consists of the 6 members of the regular State Board, 6 additional members, the Chief who chairs and votes, and 1 non-voting ex-officio member	New board members must take training established by the SEA during the first year of membership
Oregon	Appt. by Gov.	7	4	Non-partisan ballot	Admin. Officer	K-12 and community college authority	
Pennsylvania	Appt. by Leg..	9	6	Appt. by Gov.	Chief Executive Off.	Statutory responsibility for post-secondary education.	
Rhode Island	Appt. by Gov.	11	5	Appt. by SBE	Chief Executive Off.		
South Carolina	16 appt. by Legislature and 1 appt. by Gov.	17	4	Partisan ballot	Sec. & Admin. Off.	Legislative delegations elect 16 board members	
South Dakota	Appt. by Gov.	9	4	Appt. by Gov.	Executive Officer		
Tennessee	Appt. by Gov.	11 incl. student member	9	Appt. by Gov.	None	Voting student member At least 1 SBE member must be of a minority race	Board maintains its own staff apart from the Department of Ed.
Texas	Partisan ballot	15	2 or 4	Nom. by SBE and appt. by Gov.	Executive Sec.	The SBE is also the State Board for Vocational Education Some board members have two year transitional terms	

State	Method of Selection of State Board of Education (SBE)	Number Voting SBE Members	Length of Board Member Term	Method of Selection of Chief State School Officer	Official Role of Chief on SBE	Unique Feature of State Board	Special Notes
Utah	Non-partisan ballot	15	4	Appt. by SBE	Executive Off.	$1,500 per year for SBE members	
Vermont	Appt. by Gov. & confirmed by Senate	7	6	Appt. by SBE	CEO & Sec.	Chair is elected by the board for 2 year term	
Virginia	Appt. by Gov.	9	4	Appt. by Gov.	Secretary		Sec. of Ed. is a cabinet member
Washington	9 elected by local school board members, 1 elected by private schools, and Chief is ex-officio member	11	4	Non-partisan ballot	Chief Executive Off. and ex-officio member	The Chief votes only to break ties The private school representative votes only on issues affecting private schools 2 participating but non-voting student members Non-voting Governor's representative	
West Virginia	Appt. by Gov.	9	9	Appt. by SBE	Chief Executive Off.		Chief must have 5 years in education administration.
Wisconsin	No SBE			Non-partisan ballot			A state advisory board ("Education Commission') and a new position of Secretary of Education have been legislated, but are under court challenge
Wyoming	Appt. by Gov.	11	6	Partisan ballot	Ex-officio member	Meets quarterly; reviews all school accreditation compliance for approval or disapproval Deputy Chief is ex-officio member and parliamentarian	
District of Columbia	Non-partisan ballot	11 plus 1 student	4	Appt. by SBE	Ex-officio member	The student member votes only on Student Services Committee	
Guam	Elected by district	9	4	Appt. by Board	Executive Secretary	Serves as both the state and local board. Board has one student member and one parent organization member 3 ex-officio members: 1 non-public school rep;1 Secretary of Defense rep; 1 Bargaining Unit rep.	
Northern Marianas	Elected	6		Appt. By Board		Serves as both the state and local school board	
Puerto Rico	Appt. by Gov.	7	5	Appt. by Gov.	Ex-officio member	Serves as both the state and local school board Four members must have knowledge and experience in education, one a classroom teacher	



The National Association of State Boards of Education is a nonprofit, private association that represents state and territorial boards of education. Our principal objectives are to strengthen state leadership in education policymaking; promote excellence in the education of all students; advocate equality of access to educational opportunity; and assure responsible lay governance of public education.

NASBE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-4000

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").